



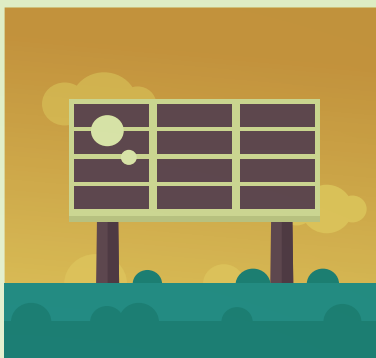
European Committee
of the Regions

Commission for
the Environment,
Climate Change and Energy

ENVE

Cities and regions for climate: showcasing local and regional sustainable initiatives

From Paris to Bonn



COP23 | FIJI

UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE

BONN 2017



Foreword

by CoR President **Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ**



From Paris to Bonn: European regions and cities delivering climate action

Last year, the European Committee of the Regions took a clear message to the COP22, the UN Climate Change Conference in Marrakesh: we are already delivering – and have the potential to fully achieve the commitments taken by EU Member States in the Paris Agreement. Our view at that time is still valid today: the Paris signatories should fully integrate cities' and regions' role and achievements in a new multi-level framework for climate and push for even more ambitious targets.

We would like to recall the fact that climate change is a global problem, but to address it in the most effective way possible a multi-level, multi-stakeholder governance approach is needed. In light of this, the Committee calls for the role of local and regional governments to be recognised and enhanced with a view to achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement more effectively.

However, we regret the slow pace at which some countries are



implementing the Paris Agreement as upholding its aims is not an option but a necessity. That is why the Committee encourages the Commission and Member States to take all measures necessary to ensure that the EU becomes the true international leader in the fight against climate change. With discussions on the post-2020 EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) beginning, we propose that climate change and sustainability issues become a cross-cutting trend across all funding programmes and minimum allocation targets for climate be included both for the MFF as a whole and for the main funding programmes.

Local and regional authorities deserve better recognition and a stronger role in the implementation of the Paris Agreement. We strongly welcome and support the statements of many American mayors and governors to stay in line with the Paris objectives and deliver the commitments made by the US government on climate change.

The Covenant of Mayors is today the largest network of cities and regions engaged in climate action, gathering some 7,500 signatories and representing over 230 million inhabitants. Taking into account this experience and engagement, all EU Member States should involve local and regional authorities to a greater extent in drawing up national energy and climate plans in order to encourage coordination between national plans and local and regional ones, in line with Article 4 of the Paris Agreement governing national contributions to greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

This brochure wishes to be a contribution to the COP23 debates by presenting best practices that Members of the European Committee of the Regions are implementing. From energy-efficiency initiatives to the deployment of renewable energy sources and low-emission transport schemes, it shows how our local and regional communities are already making change happen.



Cor **LAMERS**
Mayor of Schiedam – The Netherlands

Cor Lamers, President of the Commission for the Environment, Climate change and Energy (ENVE) and Mayor of Schiedam, knows well that sustainability is the way forward for regions with large industrial seaports. There are not a lot of areas more urbanised and energy intense than seaport regions. Home to the highest concentration of human enterprise and diversity, seaport regions offer promising conditions for its cities and industries to develop and create economic and social wealth. The Schiedam port is the basis

of several state of the art shipyards and offshore companies, but also of maritime related businesses like companies specialised in vessels' design, engineering and maintenance.

Innovation and sustainability are key factors within Schiedam's port development strategy. The city has been cooperating with a wide range of stakeholders to identify and develop priority and most strategic sustainability measures. Attended by private companies, research institutes, city and regional counsellors but

also residents, Schiedam organised a series of meetings to agree and launch new modes of energy production, such as tidal and geothermal energy as well as installing solar panels and windmills on rooftops. Schiedam's concerted and inclusive approach has led to an agreement between the maritime industry, the Port of Rotterdam, the city of Schiedam, the province, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment and the residents to become a sustainable seaport world reference.



Witold **STĘPIEŃ**
President of Łódzkie Region – Poland

The first Vice-President of the ENVE Commission at the CoR, **Witold Stępień**, is the President of the Łódzkie Region in Poland. This important industrial region joined the Step By Step commitments for Energy Savings through its involvement in the research and innovation centre Pro-Akademia.

The project aims at encouraging people to change their behaviour in relation to energy consumption in order to produce energy savings. It

uses a very innovative service, mixing various communication tools and psycho-social techniques processed via a machine-learning platform. The project provides strong and personalised support to households in order to encourage them to reduce energy consumption. The entire process is deployed in coordination with all stakeholders, and involves contacting households on regular occasions (at least once every six weeks). Community-based social marketing strategies are used to

encourage energy-related investment decisions.

During this project, 6 300 households in four European regions have been asked to participate, saving 6 000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions a year. This project received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme and involved nine private and public partners from six countries.



Sirpa **HERTELL**
Member of the Espoo City Council – Finland

CoR member and Espoo City Councillor **Sirpa Hertell** has the honour to represent the most sustainable city in Europe, according to an international comparison completed in 2016. As cities play a key role in responding to climate change, Espoo is building a sustainable future through mobility, construction and energy solutions, by offering teaching and education that support a sustainable lifestyle. It does so by providing culture, sports and social and health-care services that enhance well-being, and by maintaining natural and green areas in its territory.

For example, Espoo has taken important steps towards carbon neutrality by signing an agreement with Fortum Corporation, a clean-energy company. The agreement contains some specific actions such as developing all district heating systems with no net emissions of greenhouse gas by 2030. To accomplish this, the emission-free utilisation of geothermal heat is currently being tested in Otaniemi, Espoo. In a few years, it may produce up to 10% of total district heating needs in Espoo.

District heating and climate-friendly energy production has a big, immediate effect on citizens' welfare. The parties also agreed on marketing of products and services and promoting electric vehicles and circular-economy solutions. Lastly, Espoo also aims to significantly increase the number of electric buses in the West Metro's growth and development corridor, because electric buses substantially decrease emissions from traffic and have a positive impact on the environment.



Andres **JAADLA**
Member of Rakvere City Council – Estonia

CoR alternate **Andres Jaadla** is a member of the Rakvere City Council in Estonia. Rakvere signed the Covenant of Mayors in 2008 and became the first Estonian city to make the political commitment to adopt a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) in order to meet EU climate and energy targets. Rakvere's plan fostered the emergence of an energy efficiency movement in the city and points to six priority action lines including district heating, energy efficiency in buildings, water management, urban transport, street lighting and city planning.

Rakvere notably features among the cities that have seized the opportunity to comply with national CO₂ quotas to transform its municipal buildings, schools and kindergartens into energy efficient structures. For example, the renovation of a 1988 high-energy consuming kindergarten led to its energy bill to be divided by six. The tasks to be undertaken in the school included amendments to the ground plan to optimize the use of space, insulation of walls and the use of mechanical ventilation throughout the building which is to run with renewable energy sources,

namely solar power and geothermal heating. Rakvere is also proud of the "Smart House - Intelligent Building Competence Centre", an exemplary building which develops intelligent and smart technologies for the efficient use of home and office equipment, automated and efficient building management systems.

In total the city of Rakvere has invested almost 48 million EUR and aims at reducing its CO₂ emissions by an astonishing 42% by 2020.



Andre **VAN DE NADORT**

Mayor of Weststellingwerf and former Mayor of Ten Boer – The Netherlands



Andre van de Nadort, CoR member and Mayor of Weststellingwerf, he has contributed to sustainability of Ten Boer when he was its mayor in a typically Dutch way: cycling. The city has developed a climate-neutral transportation alternative to and from the city of Groningen along the historical trade route of Stadsweg. Before, the modern N360 alongside the Damsterdiep canal fulfilled this

function, yet the path was dangerous and even rated the fourth most dangerous cycle path in the county of Groningen.

The new and modern cycle path is away from mainstream traffic. It is known as a “cycle path Plus”, three metres wide and powered with innovative lighting. It is faster, more comfortable and safer to use than

the cycle path along the main road. Now hundreds of cyclists use it daily to get from the surrounding villages of Ten Boer along this ancient trade route into Groningen. This cycle path is part of a network of new-style cycling routes into Groningen which will lead to 15% less peak-hour car traffic and a substantial reduction of emissions in and around the city of Groningen by 2020.



Bart **SOMERS**

Mayor of Mechelen – Belgium



Bart Somers, Mayor of the city of Mechelen and CoR member, has engaged the Flemish city into several innovative projects in the field of sustainability. One of these initiatives is the project “See2Do!”, a Flanders-Netherlands cross-border project funded by the EU’s Interreg program. Following the do-by-see principle, Flemish and Dutch partners

work together to show residents the benefits of renovating their homes, providing a guidance programme and accompanying them to improve the energy performance of their homes.

Another great initiative is the city’s agreement with energy providers to fully convert public city lights into energy efficient LEDs. New

lights are equipped with a smart technology that automatically adjusts light intensity at night, making it possible to further reduce energy consumption. The city only paid a symbolic Euro while energy providers cover investment costs and reap the long-term benefit of reduced energy charges.



Adriana **KRNÁČOVÁ**
Mayor of Prague – Czech Republic

Adriana Krnáčová, Mayor of Prague and CoR member, has embraced technology in order to boost sustainability in her historical city. Prague has many ancient buildings with a great potential for being energy upgraded to improve living and working conditions while reducing energy costs.

The renovation of the National Theatre is an example the city is proud of. As

much as 50% of the theatre's energy consumption is now supplied by solar power. The city has also developed an ingenious way of using the water from the Vltava river to cool and heat buildings.

On energy efficiency, the city has been installing smart LED lamps that are also able to encode data on air pollution and noise. In addition to increasing energy savings, the city's

network of smart lamps is becoming an important data platform for impact, evaluation and city planning. Given that 85% of all citizens will live in cities by 2050, intelligent city management based on data is the way of the future.



Francesco **PIGLIARU**
President of the Sardinia Region – Italy

Francesco Pigliaru, member of the CoR and President of the Sardinia Region, which is on the front line when it comes to tackling the consequences of global climate change.

In October 2016, under the chairmanship of Mr Pigliaru, the Sardinia region got involved in the LIFE-funding MASTER ADAPT project: MAInSTreaming Experiences at Regional and local level for ADAPTation to climate change.

This project addresses the needs of metropolitan areas experiencing climate vulnerabilities by developing and testing innovative multilevel tools and approaches. It aims to identify the main climate risks and priority actions, in order to develop a common methodology for mainstreaming adaptation and draw up guidelines for governing in urban areas. Many territories in other parts of Italy such as the region of Lombardy and the city of Venice have taken part in this project, coordinated by the Sardinia

region. The project's purpose is to develop multilevel governance with top-level planning in order to increase cooperation and coordination between the different levels of territorial government and among different policy sectors. Furthermore, the project contributes to improving cross-sectorial and cross-stakeholder cooperation, since the project deals with public institutions as well as not-for-profit scientific associations, environmental consultancies and universities.

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Jordi **SAN JOSÉ BUENAVENTURA**
Mayor of Sant Feliu de Llobregat – Spain



Jordi San Jose Buenaventura, CoR member and Mayor of Sant Feliu de Llobregat, signed the Covenant of Mayors in 2009. The municipality has a population of 44 000 inhabitants and is currently implementing several sustainable projects, from renewable energy, such as biomass installations and solar panels to cycling schemes. Other areas of action are public lighting, public transport and public vehicle fleet, waste and water management. The implementation of its Sustainable Energy Action

Plan (SEAP) should lead to an overall reduction of 20-22% of GHG emissions by 2020 in relation to 2005. The estimated emissions' reduction per sector is as follows: 43% in residential public lighting, 27% in transport, 17% in local electricity and 10% in the municipal and other sectors. The cost of the plan is estimated at €40,000.

As Covenant of Mayors coordinator in the Barcelona province, the 'Diputació de Barcelona' is supporting the climate actions being developed in

Sant Feliu de Llobregat. A total of 236 municipalities out of the 311 of the Barcelona province have joined the Covenant of Mayors and are benefiting from the technical and financial support of the 'Diputació'. The Covenant coordinator has already channelled €80 million in energy efficiency and renewable energy projects from the EU's ELENA facility. Results show a 12% decrease in energy consumption from 2005 (baseline year) to 2014. Greenhouse gases emissions have dropped more than 30%.



Anders **KNAPE**
Member of Karlstad City Council – Sweden



Anders Knappe, Councillor of Karlstad and CoR member, deals with the topic of climate change in a very tangible way. This is because his municipality is surrounded by water, making adaptation measures a necessity for the city's future. Karlstad Municipality has been working for a long time to prevent flood risks. Since 2007, the city

employs a Flood Risk Management Coordinator and a Flood Risk Management Programme has been implemented in the municipality since 2010. Furthermore, Karlstad is part of the Making Cities Resilient initiative.

An example of flood prevention is the integrated city plan to deal with

once-in-a-hundred years' water flows. This is necessary because the city is located where the longest river in Sweden meets the biggest lake in western Europe. What is unique is the way they have integrated this issue across all services to citizens – from getting children to school each day to planning the city centre of tomorrow.



Åsa Ågren **WIKSTRÖM**
Member of Umeå City Council – Sweden

In June 2016, CoR alternate **Åsa Ågren Wikström**, a member of Umeå City Council in Sweden, became a CoR Covenant of Mayors Ambassador and pledged to promote Umeå's action against global warming and its environmental and socio-economic benefits. The Swedish municipality has been at the forefront of local innovation and cooperation. Among other activities, the Umeå municipality has successfully implemented a wide array of projects, ranging from green parking payoff and ultra-fast chargeable electric buses to developing a systematic learning

approach to sustainable development in schools.

Sustainable Ålidhem deserves a special mention as the winner of the Sustainable Energy Europe award in 2013, the European Commission's top energy prize. This unique national pilot project for sustainable urban development includes social, technical, environmental and economic changes. The project focuses on large-scale sustainable renovation of 1960s and 1970s buildings, side-by-side with new low-energy buildings. The overall objective is to reduce energy use, create a more comfortable and safe

environment and transform Ålidhem into a sustainable neighbourhood. As such, the city works on the renovation of 405 apartments with a decrease in energy consumption of 40–50%. It also plans the construction of 137 apartments with an energy consumption level of 65 kWh/m² per year, 50% less than the specified building standards requirement. Finally, about 400 kW of photovoltaic cells have been installed, which will supply the area with a third of the electricity consumed in buildings. Consequently, the energy use in the area is expected to drop by half, with sustained rent levels.



Daiva **MATONIENĖ**
Member of Šiauliai City Council – Lithuania

Daiva Matonienė is a member of the Šiauliai City Municipal Council, CoR alternate and former Vice-Minister of Environment of Lithuania. The Lithuanian government has been actively committed to investing in the renovation of public buildings in order to improve energy performance and contribute to EU's objectives of reducing energy consumption by 20% by 2020. Buildings are responsible for 40% of energy consumption and 36% of CO₂ emissions in Europe.

Šiauliai City Council recognised the importance of such investments and

benefited from innovative financing schemes such as JESSICA (Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas) to improve the energy efficiency of buildings and contribute to job creation locally. Following the renovation of the buildings, the municipality saved between 40–50% on energy consumption which translated into a reduction of 10% of its total energy bill.

In 2013, the Lithuanian government launched a new renovation model aimed at removing financial and

administrative barriers, and decreasing the burden for the dwellings' renovation. With this new model, municipalities are able to identify the least energy efficient multi-flat buildings, appoint a legal entity dealing with the loan and provide technical supervision of the construction works. In addition, an agency owned by the Ministry for the Environment provides technical support and housing information, and supports the design of investment projects.



Kata **TÜTTŐ**
Member of Budapest City Council – Hungary

Kata Tüttö, alternate member of the European Committee of the Regions and local representative of District 12 of Budapest, continually highlights the importance of the Covenant of Mayors and has been actively campaigning for cities and regions to have more resources to drive the climate agenda forward. Kata Tüttö was the CoR rapporteur on the opinion 'The future of the Covenant of Mayors', adopted in December 2015.

The Budapest Zoo heating project brings together the Budapest Zoo and Botanical Garden, Szechenyi Thermal Bath and the Budapest District Heating Company. They have joined forces to reduce the carbon emissions emitted by the zoo and save on energy costs by supplying heating and hot water from Szechenyi's natural hot springs.

Coming straight from the spring at 75 °C, the water is too hot for spa

guests to enjoy safely and must first be cooled. The idea was therefore to use the surplus hot water to heat the facilities at the zoo, using a heat exchanger installed at the bath. Not only have the heating costs decreased, but there is now a reliable heating system to complement the older one. The initiative is also helping the municipality to protect the environment as it has already reduced GHG emissions by 21%.



Bruno **HRANIĆ**
Mayor of Vidovec – Croatia

CoR member **Bruno Hranic** is the mayor of Vidovec in Croatia, a municipality which is taking the lead in promoting energy efficiency in households. Family houses account for 65% of the housing stock in Croatia and most of them have minimal thermal insulation. Such houses use 70% of their energy for heating, cooling and hot water preparation. Energy efficiency measures can significantly reduce their

consumption, in some cases up to 60% compared to the current system. This is why the municipality of Vidovec started the "Energy efficiency of family houses" project cofinanced by the EU through its participation in the Croatian Environmental Protection and Energy Efficiency Fund. It provides for the replacement of existing exterior joinery, improvements to thermal insulation and energy inspection and certification for family houses. The

aim of the programme is to increase energy efficiency, reduce energy consumption and CO₂ emissions and reduce people's monthly energy bills, all while improving their quality of life.

As Vidovec shows, local and regional authorities can develop appropriate measures and strategies in order to support the efficient use of resources by conducting careful assessments of specific local aspects and conditions.



Tanya **HRISTOVA**
Mayor of Gabrovo – Bulgaria



CoR member **Tanya Hristova** is the Mayor of the city of Gabrovo in Bulgaria. Since the end of the 1990s, this city has developed a strong interest in implementing different energy-efficiency projects using sustainable approaches and smart technologies.

An initial project launched by the municipality of Gabrovo was the building of the Sun Kindergarten which is constructed with passive house standards. The building has 20 centimetres of wall insulation, triple

windows with a special system for air thickness and a water-air pump that allows air to be heated during cold periods.

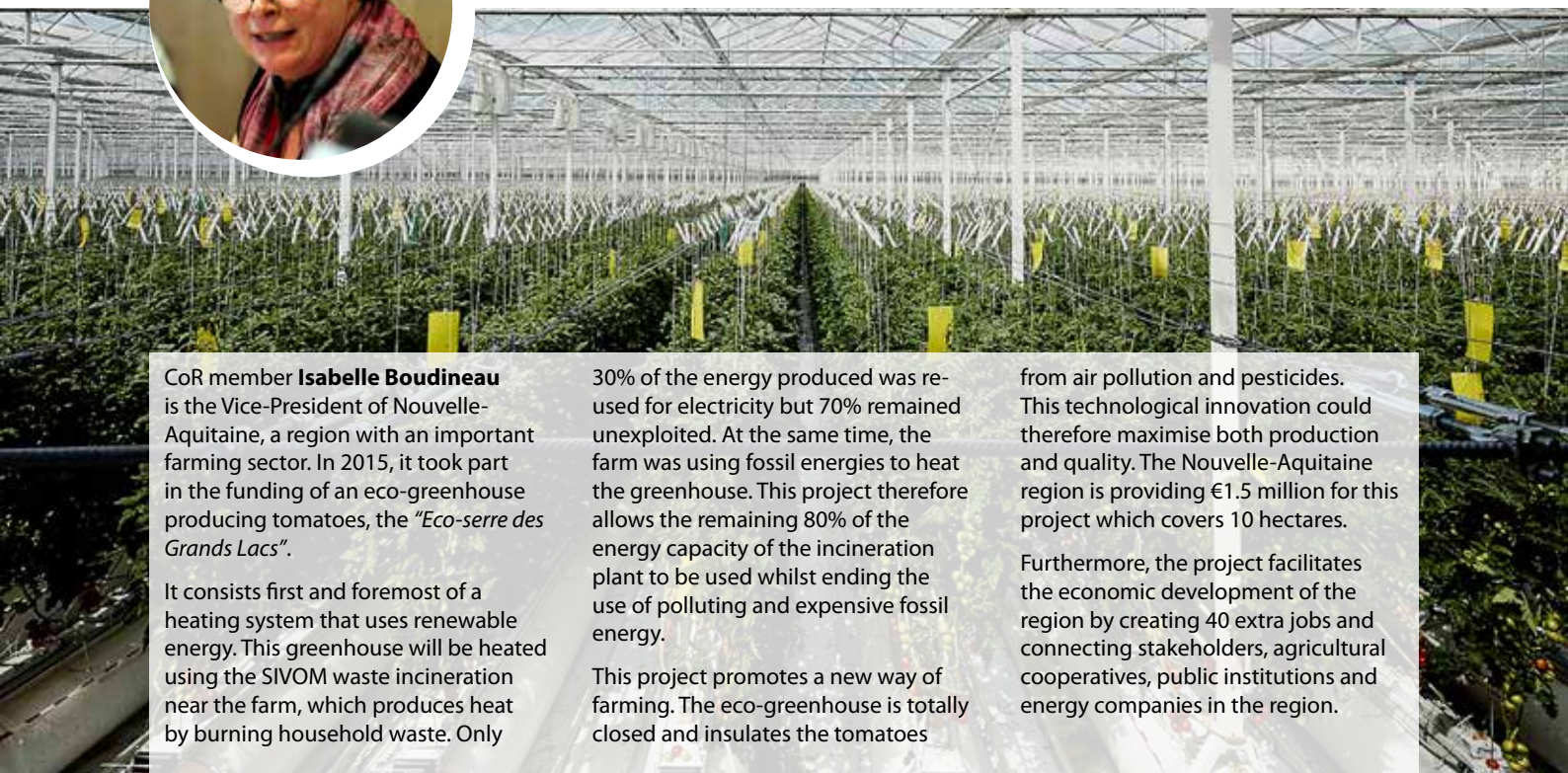
A second project example aims to build a neighbourhood of energy-efficient buildings in order to offer people better conditions in their living premises and lower energy costs, whilst contributing to the greening of the environment. It is part of the Bulgarian Programme for Residential Energy Efficiency.

One of the city's next projects will be replacing streetlights with LED lamps. Another upcoming initiative will tackle the transport sector: the city will purchase new buses, including electric ones, and integrate information and communication technologies that will provide live information about the exact arrival time of the buses.

The common thread running through these projects is the cooperation between citizens, schools, public institutions, universities and businesses.



Isabelle **BOUDINEAU**
Vice-President of the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region – France



CoR member **Isabelle Boudineau** is the Vice-President of Nouvelle-Aquitaine, a region with an important farming sector. In 2015, it took part in the funding of an eco-greenhouse producing tomatoes, the “Eco-serre des Grands Lacs”.

It consists first and foremost of a heating system that uses renewable energy. This greenhouse will be heated using the SIVOM waste incineration near the farm, which produces heat by burning household waste. Only

30% of the energy produced was re-used for electricity but 70% remained unexploited. At the same time, the farm was using fossil energies to heat the greenhouse. This project therefore allows the remaining 80% of the energy capacity of the incineration plant to be used whilst ending the use of polluting and expensive fossil energy.

This project promotes a new way of farming. The eco-greenhouse is totally closed and insulates the tomatoes

from air pollution and pesticides. This technological innovation could therefore maximise both production and quality. The Nouvelle-Aquitaine region is providing €1.5 million for this project which covers 10 hectares.

Furthermore, the project facilitates the economic development of the region by creating 40 extra jobs and connecting stakeholders, agricultural cooperatives, public institutions and energy companies in the region.



Michel **LEBRUN**

Member of Viroinval Municipal Council, former President of the CoR – Belgium

Viroinval, a city in southern Belgium, is a signatory of the Covenant of Mayors and has an action plan for sustainable development. Michel LEBRUN, CoR member and Mayor of Viroinval stated: “We realised, though, that we also needed to educate our community. Together with the Viroin Hermeton natural park, the municipality embarked on a project that to raise local people’s awareness not just of sustainable energy, but of their heritage and local history.

For nearly a thousand years, a mill had been an integral part of the economic and social life of the village of Nismes. In the 1930s, however, the mill stopped milling grain.

The mill is now back in operation: in June 2017, the mill was given a new wheel. The movement of the wheel now produces not grain, but the equivalent of five households’ worth of electricity consumption, and the Action-Sud cultural centre just opposite is powered by its output.

Passers-by can stop to read an educational information board that tells the history of the mill (from the ninth century to the present day) and read the technical specifications of the windmill, and, since September 2017, children from schools in Viroinval, Couvin and Philippeville have been able to attend talks about the mill. And soon, we will put up an electronic display that will show passers-by the mill’s electricity output in real time.”



Vojko **OBERSNEL**

Mayor of Rijeka – Croatia

After joining the Covenant of Mayors initiative, initiated by the European Commission in 2009, the City of Rijeka, whose mayor is the CoR member **Vojko Obersnel**, opted to develop itself sustainably by reducing greenhouse-gas emissions, increasing renewable energy, and improving energy efficiency.

Renovating buildings is central to that approach, and for good reason. Across the EU, buildings account for 40% of emissions. In Rijeka itself, two-thirds of our buildings were built before energy-performance standards even existed; pre-1945 buildings in Croatia are particularly inefficient. Renovation

adds almost twice as much value as constructing new buildings, and retrofitting could save energy and money. When you put that next to renovation rates of around only 1% per year, the scale of the challenge becomes clear. We want to change that situation.


In 2016, for example, we renovated two kindergartens and two elementary schools; there are plans to do the same for another 15 facilities. The investment – much of it courtesy of EU funds – should more than halve energy consumption, with much of that energy coming from renewable sources.

Increasing the rate, quality and effectiveness of building renovation will be a challenge for decades. It will be crucial to address market failures, and to combine public funds with private investment. We hope renovation rates can be doubled, to at least 2% annually, with the help of the EU’s structural funds, its investment plan, its update of its Energy Performance in Buildings Directive and its Finance for Smart Buildings initiative. This should also create jobs in an industry that already employs 18 million people.



Amadeu **ALTAFAJ I TARDIO**

Permanent Representative of the Autonomous Community of Catalonia – Spain



The Ter delta in Catalonia's Costa Brava is an area of great ecological interest, with coastal lagoons and marshes. But it is under pressure from man – in the form of tourism, farming, and a decades-old property development on marshland – while floods, storms and rainfall (the most recent extraordinary event being in December 2008) have shown how vulnerable the area is to the effects of water. Further deterioration is predicted, because of

rising sea levels and extreme weather events associated with climate change.


Catalonia wants to adapt the area to climate change. Two projects in the EU's LIFE programme are helping its effort: MEDACC, which is designed to test innovative solutions aimed at adapting agro-forestry and urban systems to climate change in the Mediterranean, and Pletera, which aims to restore the coastal

environments located on the River Ter. A real measure of adaptation to climate change has been achieved, with some recovery of the coastal lagoons, marshes and ponds, and with the removal of roads and embankments in the incomplete property development. Modelling suggest that future floods would be 25cm lower throughout the area than the flood that took place in 2008.



Henk **STAGHOUWER**

Member of Groningen Provincial Council – The Netherlands



Because of climate change, dykes in the Ems estuary need strengthening. At the same time, the estuary is suffering from too great a concentration of sludge – due to dredging and land reclamation – and the transition zone between land and water is too severe, affecting natural processes, with negative consequences for the fish and bird populations.

Together, the province of Groningen, regional water boards, local authorities and NGOs are working on a project – the Eems-Dollard2050 programme – that will combine nature recovery with water-safety measures and sustainable development. To ensure that the area will be resilient and climate-proof, new approaches for water safety are being developed and tested.

In the Twin Dyke pilot project, a new dyke is being built inland from

the existing dyke to protect against floods. An inlet built into the existing dyke will allow salt tidal water into the area between the twin dykes; the space between the dykes will be used for salt-resistant agriculture, cockle cultivation, natural purposes, and sludge collection. In another pilot project, the Green Dollard Dyke, new resting and breeding areas for birds are being created.



Andrew **COOPER**
Member of Kirklees Council – United Kingdom

Efforts to curb climate change can also reduce fuel bills for people on the very lowest incomes. That is something that in the UK, CoR member and Kirklees Council member **Andrew Cooper** is currently proving, through a scheme to install solar panels on the roofs of 2 000 local-authority homes. Tenants will save nearly two weeks of rent each year through lower energy costs.

This is one of many initiatives this century. In 2000, I initiated the council's Renewable Energy Fund, which has seen Kirklees become the leading authority in the deployment of microgeneration technologies;

over 5% of the UK's solar capacity is now located in the borough. In 2008, Kirklees successfully secured funding for its Kirklees RE-Charge scheme, which provides householders with renewable technology for their homes with no upfront costs or monthly payments. This scheme won the British Renewable Energy Awards in 2010. Kirklees was also ranked as having the most successful insulation scheme in the country by the Department for Energy and Climate Change, after offering the first universally free insulation scheme and (by 2011) insulating over 50,000 Kirklees homes through the scheme.

Steps like these will help to make sure that the UK has a secure energy supply, reduces greenhouse-gas emissions, and stimulates investment in new businesses. Local planners have an important role in introducing renewable- and low-carbon energy infrastructure. English local planning authorities are responsible for renewable and low-carbon energy development of up to 50 megawatts installed capacity; and the government intends to amend legislation so that all applications for green energy development are handled by local planning authorities.



Sławomir **SOSNOWSKI**
President of Lubelskie Region – Poland

The Covenant of Mayors recommends that its signatories draw up a Sustainable Action Plan. The Lubelskie Region has done that, and the plan has led to a set of Low-Emission Economy Plans that serve as the basis for efforts to improve energy efficiency and increase the use of renewable energy in South-Eastern Poland.

Within its climate-action package, the Lubelskie Region has developed smart specialisation plans and many other regional programmes, including one in which municipalities have

established 50,000 installations to provide renewable energy to households. Energy advisers employed by the province's Regional Energy Bureau help enterprises, associations, the housing sector and individuals to elaborate and implement investments that contribute to reaching the objectives of the climate package. They also monitor the overall progress of the Low-Emission Economy Plans.

There are no hard and fast rules about how suitable areas for renewable energy should be identified. However,

in selecting locations, regional and local planning authorities have to take into account technological requirements and – critically – the potential impact on the local environment, including the cumulative impact. It is important to set out the factors that should be considered, and these factors may depend on research conducted into the area. Some renewable-energy schemes may have a visual impact on their environment, and it may also be appropriate to assess the potential impact on the overall character of a landscape.



Adam **STRUZIK**
President of Mazowieckie Region – Poland

The health sector has been a particular focus of renewable-energy efforts by the Mazowieckie Region, with over PLN 40 million (€9.5m) invested between 2014 and 2017 to install solar collectors in 12 hospitals. Most of this funding (85%) has come through the Swiss-Polish Cooperation Programme, with the remainder coming from the Mazowieckie Region itself and the President of Mazowieckie Region and CoR member **Adam Struzik**. It has proved a perfect fit with the environmental policy pursued by Mazowieckie for many years.

Within months, some benefits – cleaner air and significant savings –

were evident. This investment should save about 25% of the cost of heating water. Comprehensive modernisation of the water and central heating systems in eight of these hospitals will provide additional savings, by significantly improving in energy efficiency. The project was also part of a broad educational campaign. Residents of Mazowieckie have participated in lectures, workshops and competitions promoting the benefits of using renewable energy. Together, this has become one of the largest health projects in the Voivodship in recent years.

The effort to improve the results from the solar systems, and thus increase the savings, has required a range of solutions. In most hospitals, especially those in Warsaw, the collectors were installed on the roof. Other solutions have included solar farms in Ciechanów, Radom, Siedlce and Ostrołęka. A very innovative approach was taken by the provincial hospital in Płock, which mounted solar panels on pergola over its parking lot. Solar nodes have been placed in specially adapted and refurbished boilers, while a completely new building was built in Radom hospital.



Miren Uxue **BARCOS BERRUEZO**
President of Navarre – Spain

CoR member and President of Navarre, **Miren Uxue Barcos Berruezo** reports that is drawing up a new climate-change strategy whose main objective is to increase resistance to climate change. Its approach is comprehensive and the strategy will be the first in Spain to fully integrate the climate-related environmental and nature conservation objectives of the EU's LIFE programme.

Six strategic areas have been identified – monitoring, water, forestry, agriculture, and land-use planning – and the roadmap addresses climate mitigation, climate adaptation, the promotion of best practice, and

awareness-raising. This will provide a strategic framework that should enable Navarre to reach the objectives set at the European and global level, through the UN climate agreement in Paris and in European legislation. The EU is providing support – for example, the EU is co-funding 55% of a €14.5 million climate-change adaptation project – and Navarre's approach is collaborative: at the very beginning of the project, it created a stakeholder platform to ease regional, interregional and cross-border cooperation.

Navarre's previous strategy focused on curbing change through energy savings and the use of renewable

resources. This included a push to renovate homes to boost energy efficiency and to promote use of biomass to heat public and private buildings. This policy roll-out began in the Chantrea district of Pamplona, the regional capital, and was then extended to other districts of Pamplona and to towns across Navarre. Our aim is to establish green policies at all levels of government, and we have seen authorities across Navarre support several other projects that bring great environmental, social and economic benefits.



**European Committee
of the Regions**



October 2017

Created in 1994 following the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, the European Committee of the Regions is the EU's assembly of 350 regional and local representatives from all 28 Member States, representing over 507 million Europeans. Its mission is to involve regional and local authorities and the communities they represent in the EU's decision-making process and to inform them about EU policies. The European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council are obliged to consult the Committee in policy areas affecting regions and cities. It can appeal to the Court of Justice of the European Union if its rights are infringed or it believes that EU law infringes the subsidiarity principle or fails to respect regional or local powers.

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