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### Call for extension of the Covenant of Mayors to Western Balkans

An extension of the Covenant of Mayors to the Western Balkans was called for in a common declaration adopted during the meeting of the presidents and directors of the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS<sup>1</sup>) in Sofia on 15 June.

The call was issued jointly by NALAS as well as by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR<sup>2</sup>), Energy Cities<sup>3</sup> and the European Foundation for the Sustainable Development of the Regions (FEDRE<sup>4</sup>), with the support of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

The Covenant of Mayors is an initiative from which candidate and potential candidate countries (IPA<sup>5</sup>) should be able to benefit. Dozens of local authorities from these countries have already committed to reducing their CO2 emissions, but more needs to be done. Indeed, related technical assistance and appropriate financial mechanisms are essential for this part of Europe to meet expectations from municipalities and regions eager to go beyond the energy and climate objectives of the EU.

Thus, the Declaration calls for the European Commission (Directorate General Enlargement and Directorate General Energy) to consider the following:

- **the importance of the Covenant of Mayors in the EU** and its strong leverage effect at the local, national and European level;
- the need to prepare IPA countries – at all levels, including the local and regional level– to **meet EU requirements**;
- the fact that about **50 local authorities from the Western Balkans have already committed** to the Covenant of Mayors, from the EU and non member countries;
- **the foreseen extension of the Covenant of Mayors to some Eastern countries**, such as Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Armenia, Belarus, etc.) with the support of the European Commission.

The EU Commission's DG AIDCO is to launch a call for tender in 2010 to establish a Covenant of Mayors Office dedicated to some Eastern countries. The present declaration calls for a similar initiative for the Western Balkans.

#### Background information:



The Covenant of Mayors is an unprecedented movement of local and regional authorities, committed to surpassing EU energy and climate objectives. The Covenant is now considered as the most powerful bottom-up initiative undertaken by local and regional authorities, mobilising 120 million citizens and 23 capitals from 38 countries, with an estimated 132 million tons of annual CO<sub>2</sub> mitigation potential. Over 1800 local authorities signed the Covenant within the first 18 months.

[www.eumayors.eu](http://www.eumayors.eu)

#### Press Contact

Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities : Dmitri Marchenkov, Division of Communication,  
Tel: +33 (0)3 88 41 38 44, [dmitri.marchenkov@coe.int](mailto:dmitri.marchenkov@coe.int)

<sup>1</sup> [www.nalas.eu](http://www.nalas.eu)

<sup>2</sup> [www.ccre.org](http://www.ccre.org)

<sup>3</sup> [www.energy-cities.eu](http://www.energy-cities.eu)

<sup>4</sup> [www.fedre.org/en](http://www.fedre.org/en)

<sup>5</sup> IPA concerns countries with candidate status (currently Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey) and potential candidate status (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia including Kosovo according to UNSCR 1244).