



Covenant of Mayors: Cities take the lead to tackle climate change

"Global problems need local solutions as well. Mayors of cities in Europe are the key people to help us develop them." said Parliament President Jerzy Buzek on the gathering of representatives of some 1,500 cities and towns in 36 countries who have signed a commitment to go beyond the EU's climate change goals, taking place on Tuesday.

President Jerzy Buzek commented: "When civil societies, administrations and institutions properly coordinate, awareness and action can be raised very effectively. That is why a great important task lays ahead us: we need to work hand-in-hand to deliver answers for citizens to what seriously concern them most such as climate change. For this reason, the European Parliament fully backs the efforts of the Covenant of Mayors initiative."

The Covenant of Mayors incorporates some 1,500 towns and cities from the EU and beyond, who share a common goal of fighting climate change. Through this bottom-up movement, local governments aim to produce specific solutions to the pressing issue of climate change, laid out in individual "Sustainable Energy Action Plans", leading to significant investments on the local level.

Jerzy Buzek, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, Prime Minister of Spain for the Spanish Presidency of the Council, José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, and Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso, first Vice-President of the Committee of the Regions, open the event at 14:00.

President Buzek said: "Energy efficiency is one of top priorities of the European Parliament. We are acting locally as well. We have introduced the "green electricity" in our buildings in Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxembourg and now we can proudly say that our CO2 emissions are reduced with 19%. More is still to be done. The Mayors' proposals for municipal infrastructure, urban transport, urban planning and the use of local renewable energy production, are the benchmarks of excellence which not only other cities can use, but they can become models for the whole of Europe to imitate."

Prior to the main programme, a press conference is taking place at 13:15 in the European Parliament. Speakers include Jerzy Buzek, Günther Oettinger, Commissioner for Energy, Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso and Sten Nordin, Mayor of Stockholm and Gianni Alemanno, Mayor of Rome.

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