



Joint Statement by the European leading local and regional networks

Energy Union Governance: The 3 musts for a new collaborative planning regime

Brussels, 28 April 2016 – The leading European local and regional organisations consider the European Union’s Energy Union Governance as a key debate. The planning processes need to reflect the opportunities arising with the changes that the European energy system is currently undergoing. These changes require a variety of new actors to be included into the planning processes, and thus both in the development and implementation of the national energy and climate plans. This does not only include increased cooperation among different government levels, but also improved collaboration with a large range of other actors. Our organisations strongly believe that climate and energy planning needs to evolve to a more holistic and inclusive process. This will allow better linking the different sectors, avoiding silo-based approaches as well as ensuring greater policy coherence among the existing plans at different levels of government. Local and regional actors are the delivery agents of the Energy Union and not acknowledging this fact puts meeting European and national climate and energy targets at risk.

1 A dedicated chapter on multi-level cooperation for energy and climate planning and reporting

A dedicated chapter in the planning and reporting framework, providing guidance to Member States on how to improve cooperation and coordination is necessary to ensure policy coherence among all levels of government. Cities as the government closest to citizens have a crucial role in defining and implementing actions and enforcing regulation in relation to energy and climate adaptation on their territory. Thus, Member States need their subnational governments to help them in achieving their climate targets, while subnational governments need their national level to provide them with enabling frameworks for action. In turn, all government levels will help the EU accelerate the implementation of the Paris Agreement and achieve its pledge. There is a need to shift from ‘action by a few to action by all’ and the EU has a crucial role in providing guidance to Member States on how to facilitate this.

2 Co-design of national energy and climate plans by national, regional and local governments in collaboration with different stakeholders

Local and regional governments are already at the forefront of the fight against climate change. As a strong example, the signatories of the Covenant of Mayors initiative have committed to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions on average by almost 30% by 2020. On their territories, these local authorities make sure that energy is saved and remaining needs are covered by local renewable sources, by planning for and investing in energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainable transport. They also facilitate and encourage civil society and private sector initiatives, which support fulfilling their goals. This fruitful cooperation scheme should be used more extensively by the national governments, in order to bring energy and climate planning practices closer together, to increase coherence and effectiveness. National plans of good quality require cooperation between the different actors and in particular between the different levels of governance. This can only be done when having a proper understanding of the actions taken at local and regional levels.

3 Integration of local and subnational plans and reporting frameworks into national energy and climate planning and reporting

Today, there is a myriad of local governments from different sizes all over the EU who have developed and are implementing their local climate and energy plans. In the frame of the Covenant of Mayors initiative, this number accounts to over 5,000 Sustainable Energy Action Plans. In this context, a sound methodology for energy planning and a reporting framework has been put in place for some years, which provides accountability, transparency and credibility. It has allowed local and regional governments to create knowledge and capacities in energy and climate planning, thus contributing to a tipping point in integrated local planning processes in Europe. Moreover, the existing reporting mechanisms for local governments, outlining the key elements of local plans, offer opportunities to National Governments to become more aware of local governments’ actions and needs. The National Energy and Climate Plans should therefore make use of existing building blocks like the local climate and energy plans. This also allows them to ensure policy coherence across different levels of government, which is key for a successful implementation of the Energy Union.