



LG Action

3rd and Final European Local Government
Positioning on Climate and Energy

Summary Paper

June 2011



www.lg-action.eu

PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER

This document provides the third and final **summarised overview of trends relevant to local government (LG) in Europe** based on input provided by representatives of European local governments (LGs) and their networks / associations in **30 countries** – the EU-27 Member States, Croatia, Liechtenstein, and Norway. Input was collected through the project '**Networking action to involve Local Governments in the EU and international energy and climate debate**' (**LG Action**) (www.lg-action.eu).

Between June 2009 and May 2011 input was obtained by various means – including the use of questionnaires, through personal contact, collecting event results, etc. – with more than 1,000 positioning items from multipliers feeding into this process. This was supported by **numerous European and national local government networks and associations**, which are herewith warmly thanked for their pro-active engagement (*also refer to supporters / associates on the project website*).

This summary paper reflects trends and typical challenges or needs identified among European cities and towns, important issues representatives have raised in the context of the ongoing **international and European climate negotiations for the post-2012 era**. It will be disseminated to all national governments, EU institutions, LG associations / networks, and LGs in the 30 target countries. Further to this it will feed into the Local Government Climate Roadmap and the post-2012 international climate negotiations.

An extensive networking project, **LG Action** explored how local initiatives could contribute to the achievement of the EU's **20-20-20 targets**. Further activities focused on:

- **Raising awareness** on LGs' powers for change and responsibility to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs).
- **Mobilising LGs** to become more active with local climate and energy action, and to link up to key European and international (UN) processes and initiatives (including Covenant of Mayors).
- **Collecting LG Positionings**, summarising these for use in national, European and international processes to identify and address needs, challenges and opportunities highlighted by LGs.
- **Assisting local-national dialogues**: formal or exploratory exchanges addressing climate and/or energy topics.
- **Conducting advocacy** at national and European level, using LG positioning relevant to climate and energy – feeding these into the post-2012 international climate negotiations.



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EDITORIAL INFORMATION

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European Local Government Positioning – key messages from 2009 – 2011:

a) Increasingly diverse reasons to engage in local climate and energy action

Local governments (LGs) – *a level of government with specific mandates and government budget* – address community-level issues, with core mandates usually revolving around urban development, local economic stability / growth, local service provision (the extent thereof differs widely from country to country), as well as developing and maintaining a good quality of life for citizens. In many countries energy and climate change do not form part of the typical municipal mandate. Despite this there is a growing interest to engage, also to obtain benefits in several areas. This is often based on a perception of responsibility to reduce emissions in local government operations, as well as the realisation that community emissions are more challenging to address as it is largely depends on changing behavior.

b) Main areas identified for support: policy, finances, technology

The need for a comprehensive, well-integrated climate and sustainable energy policy is one of the main challenges identified by LGs, once these two areas – climate change and energy – are recognised as priority areas. Policy is needed to direct and drive the sustainable energy transition process at community level, with adequate financing and appropriate technologies required to implement measures. The challenges faced include selection of appropriate policy, finding funding options, and choosing the optimal range of actions and technologies. As these activities tend to be new there is often no in-house municipal expertise, requiring support from experts – helping to guide setting-up of processes, completing integration into existing systems and structures, conducting assessments, accessing financing, designing action plans, monitoring and evaluating their implementation.

c) Improved awareness of European and international climate and energy context

A combination of developments has helped to raise interest among many LGs in contexts beyond their own local community and national borders. The Covenant of Mayors (CoM) has gained in visibility, highlighting the need for a commitment and reporting framework for LGs. The Local Government Climate Roadmap process has led to visibility and recognition of the role of LGs as government stakeholders in the international climate negotiations, and helping to focus national governments' attention on the potential in addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation in partnership with their LGs. Further to this cross border peer-to-peer exchange among LGs and their associations / networks on the topics of climate and energy has helped to draw attention to the wide range of options, tools and support offered.

d) Local governments seek to be part of the European energy and climate dialogue

With about 80% of energy related decisions that have an impact on LGs taken at the EU level, LGs increasingly want to engage in dialogue to raise their concerns – also prior to decision-making. The renewable energy, biofuels, buildings or waste management directives are but a few examples that determine local conditions through national interpretations. Some European initiatives like the CoM and actors representing LGs at European and national level have become important channels of communication between different government levels.

e) Support EU's lead in climate negotiation and call for ambitious targets

The growing realisation among European municipalities that climate action is a responsibility at a local, sub-national, national, European and global level, is connected to the next step – the need for exploring partnership and closer inter-linkage to unfold full potential. There is an overall understanding of the important role that the EU plays by setting up the general energy and climate framework – in Europe through policy-making, regulative directives and funding programmes – but also internationally, playing a leading role in the climate negotiations. The step-up to a potential 30% GHG reduction target by 2020 requires active local support, with partnership to be explored.

1. EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT FOR LOCAL ACTION

European policy

Many different EU policies are relevant to local communities, energy and climate change, although their direct impact is not always obvious or recognised. Overall the EU climate and energy package with targets to 2020, as well as the resource efficiency and green economy aspects, are highly relevant to local governments (LGs). This also leads to the EU Roadmap 2050¹, although LGs are not yet extensively engaged in dialogues on this. The roles of LGs in linking to and supporting European policies are mostly addressed via the Member States, but also through sub-national government levels and LG associations or networks representing their 'constituency'.

Growing Covenant of Mayors

A key development is the growth of the Covenant of Mayors (CoM), established in 2008. This has become a central initiative for European LGs in the context of local climate and energy action. It brings together cities and towns committed to go beyond the EU 20-20-20 targets, with signatories required to deliver a baseline emissions inventory (BEI) and a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) within one year of joining. Thereafter there is a requirement for regular reporting on developments. By the end of May 2011, the CoM had 2,666 signatories (out of more than 100,000) – large and small communities from 42 countries. These are in turn supported by Covenant Coordinators (ministries, sub-national governments, national energy agencies) and Covenant Supporters (networks and associations of local governments). The steady growth of the CoM shows there is an interest in linking to a broader framework, although there remains obvious hesitancy by the majority of European LGs to join the CoM. The following main reasons have been identified among LGs, mostly revolving around three issues:

- **Technical know-how:** A lack of capacity to deal with CoM requirements in the specified timeframe, in particular providing a BEI and develop a SEAP within one year of joining. Typically the municipal team working on climate / energy issues is small and does not have the required in-house competence to deal with these tasks on top of their day-to-day work.
- **Political significance:** In some cases there is a low level of interest in implementing comprehensive local climate and energy strategies (rather a focus on ad hoc actions), which means joining the CoM is too challenging. This situation is linked to the fact that there is often no specific mandate to address climate and/or energy – meaning a lack of staff and budgetary capacity, thus setting priorities and not dealing with any 'extra tasks'. In addition, there is often a perception that energy security and economic development has to be dealt with at national level with improved framework conditions needed to support local action. Once this is addressed the level of interest is likely to rise.
- **Uncertain value:** There is in many cases a limited knowledge and understanding about the value of the CoM and benefits it offers (rather perceived as "more work, more reporting – but what are the real benefits?"), combined with a local focus – which is the priority area of work. Council leadership's interests also shape CoM interest – where inward-looking there is limited interest or understanding of the value. Smaller communities tend to have a local and national focus due to reduced capacity to explore and monitor issues beyond this area. Last but not least, there is also uncertainty regarding the longevity of the CoM (refer to examples of short-lived EC supported actions addressing LGs where funding was stopped). In some countries this 'disinterest' is enhanced by national political complexities, including wariness vis-a-vis national governments (party political dynamics, tensions regarding mandates and budget sharing, etc.).

1 www.roadmap2050.eu

Through the Local Government Climate Roadmap² a unique global mobilisation action of LGs took place and positioning input was collected. This resulted in several documents e.g. 'International Local Government Responses' addressing issues such as shared vision, adaptation, mitigation, finance, technology transfer and capacity building – feeding into the global advocacy process, taking place for, and with, LGs. Success was achieved at the end of 2010, with the explicit recognition by states of LGs as governmental stakeholders in global climate change efforts, as reflected in the Cancún Agreements – outcomes of the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP 16) UN Climate Conference. This provides the foundation for a potentially strong partnership and requires intensified local-national dialogues as a next step to explore cooperation options – also in Europe.

A second key development at the end of 2010 was the launch of the Mexico City Pact and the carbonn Cities Climate Registry (cCCR)³, as the global response of LGs to measurable, reportable and verifiable (MRV) climate action. Still voluntary, this is a first step towards harmonising global reporting of local climate action – in turn also relevant to the CoM and other initiatives (with synergies being explored).

Financing continues to be highlighted by LGs across Europe as a major challenge. The financial and economic crisis has had a huge impact on many LGs across Europe (country specific). In general there is a call for improved information about financing options, and easier access to (application and administration processes) funds highlighted. In Europe there have been several developments to address this, with changes in the Structural Funds being explored and funding lines in the European Local Energy Assistance (ELENA) facility⁴ being added for GHG mitigation investments by clustering LGs and options for smaller and medium-sized communities – the typical European community size. Further options are currently being explored to address the need for smaller amounts of financing for local action (reducing financial risk for Councils).

Relevance of the international climate negotiation process

New global reporting process for LGs

Financing developments



2 www.iclei.org/climate-roadmap and www.iclei.org/climate-roadmap/lg-input

3 <http://carbonn.org/carbonn-cities-climate-registry>

4 www.eib.org/elena

2. CURRENT STATUS OF LOCAL CLIMATE AND ENERGY PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Context complexity

The European framework that impacts on local energy and climate action (e.g. relevant funding programmes) and the national “translations” of EU directives provide a diverse, often complex context for local governments to work in. It is estimated that about 80% of energy related decisions that have an impact on LGs taken at the EU level, LGs increasingly want to engage in dialogue to raise their concerns – also prior to decision-making. Hence the interests and needs within the local-European debate on energy and climate are equally diversified.

Supportive, passive or restrictive frameworks

National contexts clearly provide an essential framework for LGs. These range from a centralized policy and legislation framework, often without (financial) support for local action in these two fields (e.g. in many Southern and Eastern European countries), to more decentralized responsibility sharing, typically more often with national assistance. The level of open dialogue and joint budget negotiation needed between local and national governments is not yet a widely applied approach, despite a need for this in a partnership context (*refer to benchmark examples in Nordic countries*). While some LGs seek direct financial and technical support from any available options (funds, programmes, voluntary support) to bridge the lack of supportive conditions, others do the same to complement more favorable national conditions to local climate and energy action. In general reduced tax income, increased need for social services and the widening of local services, means budgets are tight and many national frameworks need to be re-assessed.

Exploring links to other themes

In the fewest European countries it is a legal mandate for LGs to develop a local climate and/or energy action plan. This has an impact on different aspects, including availability of budgets and staff, as well as priority setting by Councils. Local climate and energy is per se of interest, and exploring options to link activities to other municipal mandates is a viable alternative, e.g. urban planning and development, quality of life (also affordable and stable energy, community resilience, economic stability / growth) that link to local job creation and economic stimulus (e.g. retaining money in the local economy or getting an external financing boost). The focus on sustainable development is used to further explore options, which helps to link overall planning, activities and reporting to typical Council reporting. In some countries the Local Agenda 21 approach is helping to communicate and involve different municipal and external stakeholders.

Comprehensive approach: a missing element

Where local climate and energy action is voluntary it is often not addressed in a comprehensive, integrated and long-term manner – often citing budget limitations. Successful approaches tend to reflect a realisation that energy and climate are in effect excellent horizontal elements that can be well integrated into all activities and sectors. This can be very effectively incorporated in an action plan, guiding actions and monitoring developments – moving forward with the local climate and energy strategy. However, an overall comprehensive and integrated approach is largely missing among most European LGs. Only a small percentage of LGs have developed a comprehensive medium term action plan (e.g. up to 2020) action plan – with a smaller number still for the timeframe beyond this. The reason for this can in part be linked to the relatively short political term in office and election cycles (around 4-5 years), which tend to lead to a short term focus of local political parties in power. In those cases where there is consensus among all or most political parties that climate and energy are priorities, continuity is more likely – thereby making planning, implementation and monitoring more effective.

Positive trend: growing SEAP interest

Despite the mandate aspect and low number of comprehensive LG Action Plans available, there is a growing interest in the development of Sustainable Energy Action Plans (SEAPs) (or other Action Plans e.g. climate or sectoral) across Europe. This trend may be more slowly developing in some countries, but a constant interest has been observed. Typically in more centralised governmental structures, e.g. in many Central and Eastern European countries, opportunities for action are less flexible as local

regulations can generally only be developed according to the national framework (which does not foresee this). National legal and financial frameworks are clearly influencing SEAP development trends (*refer to the 30 LG Action Country Profiles for more details*).

Three main streams tend to draw an interest in inter- and intra-municipal (inter-departmental) cooperation on these topics. Firstly, alarming negative trends in local ecosystems (e.g. loss of biodiversity) or political differences with other levels of government (e.g. on energy dependency and security) have motivated intra-municipal action to swing back to local sustainability, with local climate action a core element thereof. Secondly, through political and/or technical staff exchanges with other LGs (neighboring, regional, national or even at international level) ideas are exchanged and action is stimulated (e.g. what works well and why, how can it be replicated – *refer to the series of LG Action case studies*). Finally, via the flow of information on European and national initiatives (e.g. through members of the Committee of the Regions and European LG networks) the interest in and cooperation between local actors is triggered, also across borders.

The influence on local energy policy, e.g. through the EU climate or cohesion policies, encourages exploring bottom-up approaches (i.e. how can LGs link to and support EU policy). Here ambitious local policy can be shaped from different entry-points:

- Immediate neighbourhood shaping local policy: A variety of different approaches, especially regarding target setting or “marketing” of the (wider) community approach also help to further shape LGs “inner policy”. The most common examples of such urban frameworks across Europe that start as local policy approaches triggering action planning in cities are: 2,000 Watt society, fossil fuel free city, low carbon economy, green-, solar- or climate resilient city (often requiring a wider geographical context, beyond local community borders). In rural areas these tend to be 100% renewables or an energy autonomous municipality. Towards each of these medium to long-term goals, corresponding short and mid-term milestones usually feed into the overall target (e.g. sectoral sub-targets). While in urban areas by trend the focus is on the building, waste and mobility sector, and many efforts on energy efficiency measures are taken, the rural areas usually focus firstly on renewable energy production in all their diversity. For both clusters energy saving remains a sleeping giant in their policy mix.
- External impacts on local policy impacted: Lately, and separate from the national level, the provincial / regional level represents a growing influence on local energy decisions, as targets are increasingly also set at this intermediate level – with a top-down impact for municipalities in the geographical area (e.g. climate neutrality or energy autonomy). This potentially also helps to shape a joint identity and required support services, as those offered by Covenant Coordinators within the CoM. In general the range of tools developed and support offered is increasing.

It is increasingly recognised by many local decision-makers across Europe (also due to increased awareness raising efforts and information campaigns by multiple actors e.g. DG ENER, the CoM and its supporting actors, also through European directives such as the Energy Performance in Buildings Directive) that sustainable energy is an effective entry point to tackle climate change. Exploring “low-cost, no-cost” options (also referred to as “low hanging fruit”) as a starting point tends to lead to a wider exploration of opportunities, from which point onwards synergy elements between typical mandates and local climate and energy action are increasingly becoming obvious to local councils. Most frontrunners have engaged in local action based on a realisation of their responsibility to contribute to climate change mitigation and the need for improving community resilience. This means budget and staff capacity is made available, based on priority setting. For those LGs that started later and do not necessarily have climate / energy as priorities, the entry point is saving money through improved energy savings

Inter- and intra-municipal motivation to act and cooperate

Local entry points and interaction options

“Low-cost, no cost” interesting start

and energy efficiency – also an interesting starting point immediately understood by citizens, with short payback times. Energy efficient lighting and changes in local government operations where prompt action is possible (e.g. switching municipal energy use to green energy, training staff on energy savings, etc..) are highly efficient in terms of immediate emissions reduction.

Challenging CoM requirements?

The requirements for developing a baseline emissions inventory (BEI) and a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) within one year (this is a requirement on joining the CoM) is challenging for many LGs starting with local climate and energy action, especially for smaller communities with few staff. This is partly due to the need for initiating new processes and potentially also changing or setting up structures. Those LGs that have joined the CoM with an Action Plan ready tend to adjust these to address CoM requirements before submission, but do not spend time on completing all the reporting forms comprehensively (due to limited available staff time) – thereby giving an impression of low quality SEAPs. However, many municipalities starting up often do not have in-house technical know-how to deal with these activities, further impacted on by budget restrictions (lack of mandate = lack of staff and budget capacity). CoM reporting requirements also do not exactly align with typically reporting needs for a Council (it is rather focused on alignment of national reporting criteria towards the UNFCCC – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change). Thus an inventory tool that has been adapted to CoM requirements is needed, or else staff has to invest additional effort to calculate required CoM reporting needs – a process that makes it unattractive to some LGs to join this initiative.

Support for LGs

On the other hand, the need for (planning, monitoring, evaluating, reporting) support implies an important role for organisations that can support LGs in a practical manner – in new CoM terminology these are called Covenant Coordinators (national ministries, sub-national governments, national energy agencies) and Covenant Supporters (mostly the European LG networks offering technical support at this stage, as many national networks are still new to these topics).

Small teams dealing with multi-focus topics

The majority of European LGs represent small to medium sized communities (less than 250.000 inhabitants). Typically teams (departments, teams, sections) dealing with these issues are (very) small – in response to the standard municipal mandate. The new interest in climate and energy implies a situation that is dramatically changing, but this does not mean municipal systems and procedures are necessarily adapted to respond to this change. The internal focus would then typically be spending most of the available staff capacity on advising Council, planning (and coordinating inter-departmental involvement), implementing and monitoring actions. This leaves limited capacity to explore the value of joining the CoM for example, or to identify optimal tailor-made policy options, to deal with searching for appropriate financing options and applying for complex financing schemes. Further to this, the selection of suitable measures and technologies – that could offer viable solutions over the next decade or more – is difficult, as there is no concise, centralised (national language) information to ease selection of low-carbon technology and infrastructure.

Tools: steering groups and champions

LGs that have set up a climate or energy steering body tend to have more effective, comprehensive approaches as this body can help identify involvement of appropriate actors which in turn helps to promote cross-sectoral approaches. A well-coordinated integrated management system also supports effectively combining efforts of different departments or teams. With a political “champion” leading the process and maintaining the Council's interest, supported by a technical expert (or team) e.g. “energy manager”, an LG can build a solid basis for continuity of local climate and energy action – the most effective examples in Europe show the value of this approach.

However, it is not only the thematic department that has to deal with these topics. Also the finance department, the procurement team, the communications colleagues are operating detached from climate and energy issues. In-house information sharing and systems for involvement are needed to ensure “buy-in” of all relevant municipal stakeholders. Creating an ‘energy manager’ or person who has the technical knowledge to shape direction and lead actions is a useful approach – and can also be partially funded from the savings made through low hanging fruit.

Tools:
systems and processes

It is critical that LGs’ technical staff have an overview of available information, tools and good practices as well as the ability to ask the right questions. This also refers to the political decision-makers who require information to make informed decisions (also on the medium to long term) on many different topics: the range of policy options and measures, selection of appropriate policies, measures, technology options, financing opportunities, finding the optimal mix of financing constellations (energy service companies, public-private partnerships, energy service contracting, etc). Looking at a new technology as one example that reflects the complexity of choice – smart grids – it is important to ask questions from many different angles, e.g. “what are smart grids?, how does it work?, will it work in my community?, how can we finance this?, is this a viable long term solution?, how can I convince my political leaders of this if there are no smart grids they can see and learn from experiences?”. Facts are needed to enable informed decision-making, also on new technologies.

Tools:
information empowers

It is essential to have an understanding of the starting point, also for future comparisons, regarding local greenhouse gas emissions. This is referred to as a baseline emissions inventory (BEI). Only the fewest LGs have thus far been in a position to develop a BEI of their own municipal operations and for the whole community. It is challenging for a number of reasons, including the need for an appropriate calculation tool, availability of data that is reliable (lack of knowledge where to find data, inaccessible data, data ownership and privacy issues, inadequate quality of data, etc.). The number of tools available makes selection difficult, as the differences between these are not always obvious.

Baseline
assessments and data

Generally, it could be noticed that LGs which already invested into a local renewable energy enjoyed a more stable income and job situation, as well as quicker recovery from the economic crisis. However, national funding is still needed (fair budget sharing, local climate financing programmes, low cost loans, etc.), in particular as a stable and reliable resource to help LGs’ planning the use of such funds. Many existing national government funding lines for energy and climate were reduced or put on hold, while “recovery packages” were created that were not optimised for incorporating climate and sustainable energy solutions – as long term EU targets. In those cases where EU funding had to be complemented by national or LGs’ own finance, in particular in the CEE, programmes and funds such as the Structural Fund did not reach their potentials. Once the economy started recovering and national programmes restarted, there was an over demand for these, resulting in a bottleneck of proposals management by the ministries – with delayed funding and other impacts. LGs require stable financing solutions for proper long-term energy planning and action.

Stable financing
mix needed



3. MAPPING OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTENSIFIED LOCAL ENERGY AND CLIMATE ACTION

Partnership as basis

European LGs recognise the need for stronger inter-linkages between different levels – local, national, European and global level – with clearly defined roles and frameworks. However, it is also obvious that these inter-linkages are not yet optimised, especially as it relates to dialogue between national / federal level and LGs, particularly when considering the local impact on, and local impact, of climate change. LGs are calling for improved communication and coordination of strategies, replacing the typical top-down approach (that often fails to address synergies and strengths offered by LGs) with a partnership approach. This has been explored in the Local Government Climate Roadmap process, with the premise that it is necessary to pick up the pace of ambitious, effective climate action – only possible with the support of local communities. The Cancún Agreements were a first step in this regard with formal recognition gained of the role of LGs. A next step is to explore options, together with LGs, on supportive policy and financing frameworks that can enable and guide local action – in turn to lead to immediate emissions reduction and other positive impacts.

Topics of local-national dialogues

Where local-national dialogues do take place these tend to revolve around mandates and budgets, exploring fair burden sharing and balancing needs of citizens and services offered against available resources. It is certainly a challenging discussion area, yet also essential to find win-win solutions that address realities and can shape responsible policy, including climate protection embedded in local developments, over the next decades. This in turn requires good management, careful planning, capacity to act, as well as long-term commitment to reach targets – as a “package” requiring open dialogue between all levels of government, jointly exploring options and finding solutions in partnership – to the benefit of society as a whole.

Mobilising people a key issue

As LGs have direct influence over a relatively small percentage of the overall emission generated in their communities, the need for informing and actively involving the community is essential. However, this is also a challenging area – as one has to address many different target groups in appropriate ways that respond to their specific needs (appropriate media and messages). LGs do communicate with their citizens on many different topics, yet the climate and energy message(s) seem to require specialists to engage multiple sectors and target groups, and lead to changed behaviour. In addition to expert guidance, research on social behaviour and encouraging change is needed – these areas are still underexplored, yet key when one considered that the EU energy efficiency target will not be reached at this tempo.

Energy services and procurement

There is a growing interest in exploring options regarding energy services that establish partnerships or some form of cooperation linked to financing activities. These for example include public-private partnerships (PPPs) and establishing energy service companies (ESCOs) – with many constellations possible for co-ownership and win-win situations through investment, improvements in efficiency and the use of renewables used in the provision of electricity, heating, etc., but also sewage, waste and maintenance services. Pre-tendering dialogues with the private sector (for procurement) have shown that there is an interest in cooperation to reduce the carbon footprint and optimize efficiency in developing products and offering services. The budgets available to LGs for procurement can effectively be used to create and shape demand for “green” services and products – an area vastly under-exploited by LGs across Europe. Money savings potential through joint procurement (bulk buying and obtaining price concessions) is one area starting to draw attention, although tender specifications should be tailor-made, requiring training on improved tendering procedures.

LG-to-LG cooperation

Often municipalities involved in climate and energy also engage in cooperation with other LGs, to share information, motivate one another, cooperate on actions (e.g. joint procurement), especially if there is a similar context such as a region or country (i.e. where similarities are known). Thus far existing formal city-twinning relationships have not yet been extensively explored as a cooperative framework on this thematic angle – with tremendous potential for cooperation.

The urban-rural connection is another area where cooperation is starting on the topic of energy, with interesting win-win possibilities. Dialogues exploring local renewable energy supply are often started where energy security is at risk, or where there is a realisation that ambitious climate and energy targets cannot be met without wider geographical cooperation. An interesting trend is the development of 100% renewable communities or energy plus communities (exporting excess energy generated), with smaller rural municipalities clustering to strengthen their situation. This development offers other interesting add value, e.g. an increased regional value chain and reduced urbanisation.

Rural-urban-energy twinning

Moreover, many LGs link to regional or European LG and/or thematic networks addressing sustainability, climate and energy to enhance exchanges, motivate and transfer knowledge. These networks engage both from a top-down and bottom-up perspective, sharing key messages and information relevant to LGs, and often also representing LGs (some also in a formal advocacy capacity) towards other levels of government. Increasingly national LG associations across Europe are understanding and exploring the (energy-relevant) needs of their members, respond to these by providing services, networking at events, providing input for positioning papers, etc. All platforms of interaction can further be used more effectively, if adequately involved and resourced.

Representing and motivating LGs

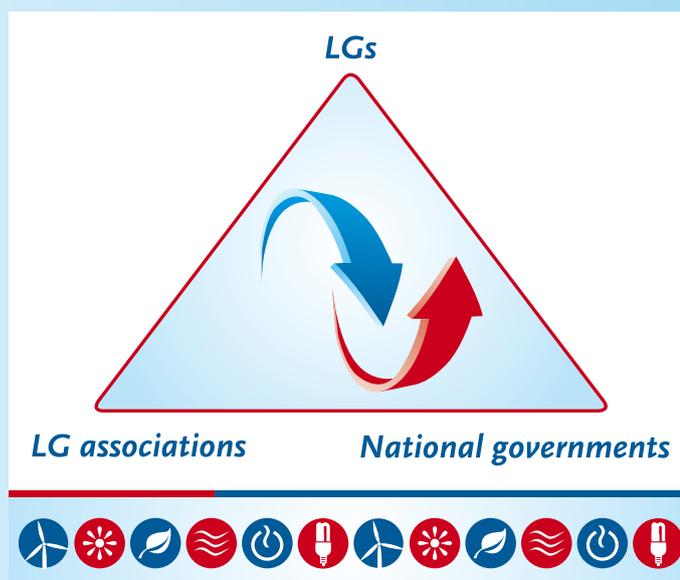
Introducing the LG Action project:

Climate protection and the transition to a sustainable energy future are currently two major priorities – particularly for local governments. **LG Action** is a European networking action that aims to involve Local Governments in the EU27 European and international energy and climate debate. It will provide information, mobilise and support the positioning of local governments (LGs), and call for greater recognition of their essential role in climate protection and sustainable energy roll-out.

The project **LG Action** “Networking action to involve Local Governments in the EU and international energy and climate debate” is an important local government (LG) networking action aimed at presenting LG positions relevant to climate and energy to a range of actors: local government associations, the Covenant of Mayors and national governments feeding results into the post-2012 climate negotiations.

LG Action addresses:

- Local governments (LGs)
- Local government associations and networks
- National governments



www.lg-action.eu/results

PROJECT COORDINATOR

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability,
European Secretariat, Germany

ICLEI is an international association of local governments and national and regional local government organisations that have made a commitment to sustainable development. ICLEI Europe is leading this project consortium.

CONSORTIUM PARTNERS

Local Government Denmark (LGDK)

LGDK is the interest group and member authority of Danish municipalities. LGDK supports the municipalities with consulting services and information to enable them to attend to their tasks in the best possible way. The membership organisation also assists regional networks in order to support political cooperation between the municipalities.

The Association of Cities and Regions for
Recycling and sustainable Resource
management (ACR+)

ACR+ is an international network of nearly 100 members with the shared aim of promoting the sustainable consumption of resources and the management of municipal waste through prevention at source, reuse and recycling. ACR+ membership mainly consists of local and regional public authorities as well as national networks of local authorities representing more than 1100 municipalities around Europe (EU-27 + candidate countries) and neighbourhood policy countries.

The Regional Environmental Center for Central
and Eastern Europe (REC)

REC is an international organisation with a mission to assist in solving environmental problems. The REC fulfils this mission by promoting cooperation among governments, nongovernmental organisations, businesses and other environmental stakeholders, and by supporting the free exchange of information and public participation in environmental decision making.

Italian Local Agenda 21 Association (CA21L)

CA21L is a non-profit national association that spreads the Local Agenda 21 concept and promotes sustainable development models. Members of the association are municipalities, provinces, regions and other local authorities, as well as all protected areas where a Local Agenda 21 Action Plan is promoted, adopted or considered in the short term.



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- ELTIS:
www.eltis.org
- Energy for Mayors –
Toolbox of methodologies:
[www.energyformayors.eu/
toolbox](http://www.energyformayors.eu/toolbox)

