

The Covenant of Mayors 2.0

To implement the Sustainable Energy Action Plans for a policy of local sustainability

This declaration has been approved by the participants of the Convention of Bologna on November 29, "Policies, Instruments and Experiences of the Covenant of Mayors 2.0"

The most concrete and important initiative to achieve the 20-20-20 goals and to continue on the path towards an Intelligent Energy Italy is the Covenant of Mayors. The 1600 Sustainable Energy Action plans elaborated until now - which soon will be 2500 and more - constitute an immense wealth of research, energy planning and design of a sustainable future. Many cities and towns, also with the support of Regions and Provinces as coordinators have started with the implementation of their plan.

This exciting and fecund movement was created by the European Commission in 2008 and has received in the last years important sustainment in terms of guidance and methodology, organisation and support through the Office of the Covenant of Mayors and the JRS – Joint Research Centre as well as through initiatives of encouragement, appreciation and praise. The inspired intention to maintain the Intelligent Energy program for the period 2014-2020 is a strong signal of a continuing support of the Covenant of Mayors by the European Commission.

Five years after its launch the Covenant of Mayors in Italy enters into a new phase: precisely the big success of this initiative in our country – where more than half of the population lives in communities committed to the reduction of CO₂ emissions – requires for the phase of implementation new forms of action and of collaboration.

New forms of action and of collaboration that *in primis* will articulate themselves in a strengthening of forms of horizontal governance between cities and towns, between provinces and regions and within the communities between the local government and the other decision makers and stakeholders. There is a wealth of collaborations that have sprung up informally between cities and provinces with the exchange of experiences, the latter responding to their function as supporting structures. A key role has been played in these year by the organisations of local entities ANCI (National Association of Italian Cities and Towns) and UPI (Italian Union of Provinces) and by the networks of local governments like Climate Alliance Italy, the National Coordination of Local Agenda 21, Kyoto Club, CEMR, INU and others. The conference on May 7 in Pescara on "Multilevel Governance and the role of coordinators and supporters of the Covenant" and the conference of November 29, "Policies, Instruments and Experiences of the Covenant of Mayors 2.0" in Bologna have been in 2013 evidence of the willingness and ability of the signatories and the Covenant coordinators and supporters to move forward the process of an integrated sustainable development of low carbon territories.

With the growth of the movement there grows the necessity of a change of priorities in the national energy policies towards supporting local governments in their actions of implementing their Sustainable Energy Action Plans. The concrete steps that need to be taken are well known:

A National Energy Strategy that acknowledges and incorporates the existing 1600 Sustainable Energy Action Plans and adopts as a central policy for the energy transformation of the country the support of local communities in the implementation of their SEAP. An import step will be to loosen the stability pact for investments in energy efficiency, transport and sustainable mobility.

The main task of the forces active on the ground – of the local governments, their networks and organisations – on the other hand is to continue to strengthen the collaboration for the Covenant of Mayors in the phase of implementation. This means to continue the big variety of

collaborations of the last years under the form of a National Platform of Dialogue of the Covenant of Mayors. A platform that is characterized by its flexible and transparent structure and that is defined by its attention on contents. Among those there are to be considered of primary importance:

- To elaborate together with the local governments the financial strategies for implementing the SEAP actions. The investments rooted in the local community can also take the form of joining forces between citizens, businesses, intermediate social entities. To be able to activate financial resources means to have strong and precise proposals of feasibility and return of investment.
- Support local governments to have access to the financial programs of the European Commission 2014-2020, that prioritize energy efficiency, intelligent energy and sustainable mobility and go together well with the aims of the SEAPs.
- Enter into a dialogue with the national and the regional governments presenting proposals on how to sustain and facilitate the implementation of their SEAPs by the local governments in the context of an integrated sustainable local development.
- Support the European Commission in the definition of binding and ambitious goals for 2030 in order to create – also at the local level – a strong motivation to put into place medium and long-term energy policies that go beyond 2020.

The participants in the Convention of Bologna on November 29 “Policies, Instruments and Experiences of the Covenant of Mayors 2.0” approve this declaration and express their intention to reassemble in March of 2014 to continue the work of facilitating and coordinating the implementation of the Sustainable Energy Action Plans in Italy.

Bologna, November 29, 2013

The declaration was accepted unanimously by the 150 participants at the convention.