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Oil, Gas & Energy Law Intelligence

Capital Cities towards Sustainable Energy by D. Bosnjak, J. Elle and K. Hoppe

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Capital Cities towards Sustainable Energy

The engagement and cooperation of the Cities of **Zagreb** (Croatia), **Sarajevo** (Bosnia & Herzegovina), **Skopje** (Macedonia), **Podgorica** (Montenegro), **Tirana** (Albania) within the Network of Energy Efficient Capital Cities in South East Europe, supported by **Freiburg** im Breisgau (Germany) as role model city – a view by the German Technical Cooperation

Abstract

To achieve progress in the field of Sustainable Energy, the involvement and engagement of several Governmental levels is crucial. Additionally, as demonstrated within several formats within the Energy Community, the regional exchange of experiences and joint learning can stimulate progress in a crucial manner. In this context the description at hand explores the cooperation of the Capital Cities in South East Europe on Sustainable Energy.

In its introductory chapters, this paper points out the importance of Local Governments for the implementation of Sustainable Energy policies and the approach of the Covenant of Mayors. The major focus is given to the engagement of a special group of Local Governments in South East Europe: The capital cities Zagreb, Sarajevo, Podgorica, Skopje, and Tirana. The steps in the development, strengthening and expanding of their cooperation are described, and the *Network of Energy Efficient Capital Cities in South East Europe*, as a result of their fruitful cooperation on their way towards the goals of the EU Covenant of Mayors Initiative. Throughout their efforts, they benefited from technical support of the *GIZ – Open Regional Fund for South East Europe – Energy Efficiency* (commissioned by the German Government). They have realized significant progress so far, but at the same time opportunities and challenges lie ahead. The efforts of the capitals might contribute towards giving impetus to other Local Governments, but also to the European Integration process of their countries.

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1. Background – The General Significance of Local Governments for the Implementation of Sustainable Energy Policies

The Central Governments of South East Europe have committed themselves towards the European Energy and Climate Protection policies. In this context the awareness of potential short and mid-term benefits, especially connected with energy efficiency approaches and with low-cost and mature renewable energies, is also growing gradually in the contracting parties. However, the Central Governments are facing the challenging task to establish and develop policy frameworks for activating self-functioning sustainable energy market dynamics. And the ambitions are growing further: In their topical Work Programme, the EE Coordination Group of the Energy Community is already reflecting the new European Union's Energy Efficiency Directive (2012/27/EU), which describes advanced objectives in upgrading energy efficiency. Among other approaches, the leading role of the public sector is stressed in this European policy, in particular in the building sector. By reviewing the defined policy approaches and objectives it becomes obvious that all Governmental levels in a country have to be engaged to realize the obligations and potential benefits.

A significant share of public buildings is under the responsibility of Local Governments in South East Europe. Further, there are many other areas where Local Governments have a crucial role in contributing towards a sustainable energy transition. Local Governments are:

- **Consumer and service providers**, also through their own utilities: beside energy consumption in buildings, Local Governments provide energy-intensive services such as public transport and street lighting;
- **Planner, developer and regulator**: Land use planning and organization of the transport system are responsibilities of most local and regional governments. Avoiding urban sprawl, setting energy performance standards or stipulating incorporation of renewable energy equipment in new buildings can reduce the energy use;
- **Producer and supplier**: Local and regional governments can promote local energy production and the use of renewable energy sources;
- **Motivator, facilitator and a role model**: Information and motivation of residents, businesses and other local stakeholders are important to engage the whole community to support sustainable energy policies. It is equally important that the authority has the capacity to lead by example, and play an exemplary and facilitating role in sustainable energy activities.

Energy efficiency laws in the South East European countries are already defining tasks and obligations for cities and municipalities. And, in some cases, cities and municipalities, through their associations, have been engaged actively in consulting procedures related to national energy policies.

However, obviously there is much more potential for creating enabling framework conditions, supportive measures and implementation dynamics in the contracting parties by using a close dialogue, a systematic information exchange, coordination, and cooperation between national and local governments.

From recent years, a remarkable number of cities and municipalities in the Contracting Parties have already been taking a committed and proactive role to contribute towards European Energy and Climate

Protection policies: they became signatories of the Covenant of Mayors to commit themselves to their responsibility towards climate change mitigation. By signing and implementing the Covenant of Mayor principles, targeted towards CO2 emission reduction, the cities and municipalities are demonstrating their role to be self-aware, responsible and proactive actors in Energy and Climate Protection policies in their countries. By doing so, they are collecting valuable experiences; they are making important contributions towards the respective policies of their countries.



Prof. dr. Alija Behmen, Mayor of Sarajevo at the CoM Ceremony, Brussels 2011

"...The situation requires faster and more efficient responses at the local and national levels, as well as more intense cooperation and synergy at the regional and international scene."

The text at hand will give a brief insight into the engagement of capital cities from the South East European contracting parties within the Covenant of Mayors framework.

Connecting the engagement of relevant stakeholders, merging commitments and knowledge, and making program and projects possible through cooperation, are important forms of upgrading own capacities. This principle holds truth in many directions – the Network of the Energy Efficient Capital Cities in South East Europe is particularly capitalising on benefits out of their cross-border exchange and activities.

2. Introduction – Engagement of Cities and Municipalities in the Covenant of Mayors in South East Europe

Today, over 5,400 cities and municipalities are members of the EU Covenant of Mayors (CoM) initiative (as of January 2014). They have committed themselves to reducing their CO2 emissions by 20% or more by 2020, and to meeting European energy and climate protection goals. Following the adoption of the EU Climate and Energy Package (from December 2008), the European Commission (EC) took decision to directly address local and regional decision makers in the achievement of EU objectives. Knowing that 80% of energy consumption and CO2 emissions is associated with urban activity, the EC launched the *Covenant of Mayors* to endorse and support the efforts deployed by local authorities in the implementation of sustainable energy policies. The Covenant of Mayors¹ is the mainstream EU initiative

¹ Source: <http://www.covenantofmayors.eu/>

uniting local and regional authorities in a common commitment to improve the quality of life of their citizens by contributing to the European Community's "3x20" climate and energy objectives. These are:

- a reduction in EU greenhouse gas emissions of at least 20% below 1990 levels
- 20% of EU energy consumption to come from renewable resources
- a 20% reduction in primary energy use compared with projected levels, to be achieved by improving energy efficiency.

Through Energy Efficiency measures and investment in Renewable Energy, Covenant of Mayors Signatories undertake to curb CO₂ emissions on their territory by at least 20% by 2020. They officially commit to submitting a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) within a year of joining the initiative. This document outlines in concrete measures how they intend to reach these objectives. Before the development of such a strategic document, an assessment of the initial situation is the first step. This is carried out through the development of a Baseline Emission Inventory, which is to be submitted alongside the SEAP and should pinpoint the carbon-intensive sectors on which action should be focused. For ensuring the successful implementation of the Action Plan a lot of essential accompanying steps are taken, such as adaptation of administrative structures, appropriate training of municipal staff, and stakeholder engagement (very often starting through the organisation of local energy days).

The envisaged result of this process is the decrease in CO₂ emissions which exceeds the target set out by the EU. Alongside the primary aims other effects are desired, such as improved quality of life, improvement of energy security, public services, development of the local economy and job creation.

Despite the fact that the CoM started as a European Union initiative, immediately cities and municipalities of non-EU member countries joined the Convention, and the engagement is high in the South Eastern European countries: in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia (FYROM), Montenegro and Serbia 76 cities and municipalities are registered as active members in the CoM (as of January 2014). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia around 40 % of the overall population are living in CoM municipalities. There is a tangible willingness among South Eastern European Local Governments to contribute to and benefit from a transition towards Sustainable Energy.

At the same time CoM signatories in South East Europe are often facing a broad range of challenges, which are mirroring to some extent similar general capacity development needs in the transition countries. Typical initial challenges for cities and municipalities in the Western Balkan countries can be:

- The need to build awareness and understanding towards the sustainable use of energy within municipal administrations (sometimes there is no history in paying for energy by public consumers) as well as among citizens;
- The lack of data and information: often there are no defined information flows about energy consumption within municipal facilities and by the municipality in generally;
- Sometimes there are complex responsibility structures towards public facilities, e.g. when schools are maintained by municipalities (including paying the energy bills), but owned by national ministries;
- Energy Management as a new topic, which isn't reflected in the organisational structure of municipalities;

- How to incorporate the cross-sector topic of energy in municipal organisational structures and proceedings;
- How to prepare and to manage energy-related projects linked to own facilities;
- How to incorporate municipal owned companies, the private sector, educational institutions, the civil society, etc. to get engaged in sustainable energy measures;
- How to incorporate energy issues in municipal policies and regulations, e.g. considering these issues in building permissions policies;
- Budget constraints and already reached limits in debt taking, even for energy efficiency projects with a clear payback;
- How to do establish a functioning cooperation with other regional or central governmental units;
- Lack of supporting structures such as Regional Development or Energy Agencies;
- Missing national support programs.

Dealing and overcoming these kind of issues is given the CoM signatories worthy impetus for their development, not only in the sector of energy, but also in general.

3. From the Capital Cities' Initiative to the Network of Energy Efficient Capital Cities

In the South East European countries around 10 to 30% of the population are living in the capital cities. The consumption of energy is increasing year by year and energy prices have a growth tendency, as



ZAGREB

[CoM Signatory](#)

Population: 788,850 inhabitants

Country: Croatia

Date of adhesion: 30 October 2008

[Sustainable Energy Action Plan SEAP](#)

Date of formal approval: 22 April 2010

Overall CO2 emission reduction target: 21%

everywhere. Due to their high energy consumption, the cities also have the highest share in emissions of greenhouse gases.

3.1 Capital Cities' Initiative

Acknowledging the need for taking over the responsibilities and recognizing the leading role of capital cities in the combat against climate change, the cities of Zagreb, Podgorica, Skopje and Sarajevo agreed to their cooperation within the project "Capacity building for energy management in cities towards the goals of the EU Covenant of Mayors - Capital Cities Initiative"; here within the City of Freiburg im Breisgau has been actively engaged as a role model city. The project (2009-2011) was supported through the Open Regional Fund for South East Europe – Energy Efficiency (ORF-EE), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit –

GIZ – is implementing on behalf of the German Government.

The Croatian capital Zagreb was one of the first cities in Europe to support the Covenant of Mayors. In 2009, cooperation between the capitals in SEE was initiated by the City of Zagreb. At that point, the Cities of Zagreb and Sarajevo had already joined the Covenant of Mayors initiative. The cities of Skopje



SKOPJE

Signatory

Population: 600,000 inhabitants

Country: Macedonia, FYROM

Date of adhesion: 29 March 2010

Sustainable Energy Action Plan SEAP

Date of formal approval: 15 June 2011

Overall CO2 emission reduction target: 21%

and Podgorica expressed their willingness to join this initiative as well.

In order to achieve the ambitious task all cities agreed to work on building capacities in human resources, organization, procedures and implementation for local energy management. Furthermore, the City of Freiburg, Germany served as a European role model city.

The cooperation project provided a platform for a regional dialogue, information and knowledge exchange, bridging to the EU, and procedures for funding by third parties. The project aimed at raising awareness towards energy aspects of city authorities and their roles as a consumer and service provider, planner, developer and regulator, advisor, motivator and model as well as producer and supplier. Special focus was given to capacity building and the introduction of energy management. Additionally, trainings and high-level education in energy management topics for city authority representatives and local decision makers had been conducted. In most of the cities Energy management offices are operational, and in each city Energy Efficiency Information Centers for citizens have been opened.

As a direct result of the first phase of cooperation, popularly called the Capital Cities Initiative, Skopje and Podgorica also joined the CoM and accepted its commitments. All cities adopted Energy Management and Environmental protection policies. By 2011 the Sustainable Energy Action Plans (SEAP) were developed, adopted by City Councils and in use as strategic documents to achieve the targets set by the Covenant of Mayors.



SARAJEVO

CoM Signatory

Population: 300,000 inhabitants

Country: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Date of adhesion: 10 March 2009

Sustainable Energy Action Plan SEAP

Date of formal approval: 22 January 2011

Overall CO2 emission reduction target: 20%



PODGORICA

CoM Signatory

Population: 136,473 inhabitants

Country: Montenegro

Date of adhesion: 3 December 2009

Sustainable Energy Action Plan SEAP

Date of formal approval: 27 June 2011

Overall CO2 emission reduction target: 20%

To demonstrate and express the growing regional partnership within the Covenant of Mayors, the Cities of Zagreb, Sarajevo, Podgorica and Skopje established a “CoM Club of the South Eastern European Capital Cities” in April 2011 in Zagreb. They committed themselves to promote the message of the CoM in the appropriate forums and, in particular, to encourage other cities, new support structures and energy agencies to join the Covenant.

Already the initial steps of the capital cities, to join the CoM and to start a regional cooperation with each other, can be seen as active engagement towards the process of approximation and integration of their countries towards the European Union.



Charter of the Covenant of Mayors Club of Capital Cities signed by Mayors Milan Bandic (Zagreb), Miomir Mugosa (Podgorica), Koce Trajanovski (Skopje) and Alija Behmen (Sarajevo)

“By establishing of the Club of the Covenant of Mayors of Capital Cities of South East Europe we wish to emphasize our strong strategic determination and stress the main goals of responsible city administration policies concerning the implementation of the programme of creation of the Network of Energy Efficient Cities, optimizing of the organizational structure in the field of urban planning, sustainable energy management, quality and safe energy distribution in the cities, reasonable energy consumption in all sectors, usage of renewable energy sources and ecologically acceptable fuels, new ICT and energy efficient green technologies.”
 Alija Behmen, Sarajevo Mayor
 (Zagreb, April 6, 2011)



TIRANA

CoM Signatory

Population: 421,286 inhabitants

Country: Albania

Covenant status

Date of adhesion: 28 May 2013

3.2 Network of Energy Efficient Capital Cities in South East Europe

Encouraged by the positive experiences of their cooperation, the capital cities envisaged a formalisation of their partnership. Towards the GIZ-implemented Open Regional Fund for South East they applied for a follow-up project “Strengthening of the Network of Sustainable Capital Cities in South East Europe” (2011-2012). Within this phase, the City of Tirana also joined the partnership to follow the example of neighbouring capitals to be engaged in sustainable development.

By establishing the Network of Energy Efficient Capital Cities (NEEC) in April 2012 in Sarajevo, the five Capital Cities committed themselves to exchange experiences and knowledge in the field of energy efficiency and sustainability issues.

On the basis of its advanced developed capacities, the City of Zagreb is contributing in particular with experiences and advice towards knowledge exchange with the partner cities. The ORF-EE provided support towards the strengthening of the cooperation between the capital cities within their network. An additional focus was given to the know-how exchange towards implementation of the Sustainable Energy Action Plans (SEAP).

Furthermore, the City of Tirana has been supported in the elaboration of its SEAP, in the accession preparations for the Covenant of Mayors, and in preparations for establishing an Energy Efficiency Information Centre. In June 2013 Tirana joined the CoM, and it is foreseen to adopt and subsequently submit its SEAP in the first half of 2014.



Mayors and Deputy Mayors at the Signing Ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding about their cooperation within the Network; Sarajevo April 2012

From right to left: Alija Behmen (Mayor of Sarajevo), Milan Bandic (Mayor of Zagreb), Dieter Salomon (Mayor of Freiburg), Edmond Panariti (Deputy Mayor of Tirana), Zeljko Vukovic (on behalf of the Mayor of Podgorica), Gordana Klincharova (General Secretary of the City of Skopje)

Beside the exchange at the expert level between the capital cities, their partnership is becoming tangible in the area of awareness raising activities. The Covenant of Mayors emphasises the approach that its members should act as a motivator and facilitator towards the citizens, private business, etc. Beside the Energy Information Centres, public events such as Energy Days are recommended. These events should serve as an occasion for local authorities to involve citizens and stakeholders in a common dialogue and activities.

The City of Zagreb has established since 2009 its annual “Energy Weeks” as a remarkable and inspiring event. Beside a very broad pallet of activities such as exhibitions, conferences, workshops and open door days, a very strong focus is given to the education of children and youth. In cooperation with relevant ministries, schools, kindergartens, experts and teachers, comprehensive programs have been developed. In every school and kindergarten a lesson about energy was organized. Teaching materials and books for children were designed and disseminated. On the basis of the trustful cooperation between the cities, Zagreb`s materials were adopted to other languages and provided to partner cities. The cities of Sarajevo and Skopje have already organized energy days, and the cities of Podgorica and Tirana are envisaging the same approach.

To support the further development of the cities’ capacities, the German Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ) agreed on a project proposal for 2014-2015 out of the ORF-EE, with a focus on supporting the development of internal monitoring and reporting systems in the capital cities to fulfil the upcoming obligations within the Covenant of Mayors.

<i>Targets of the Sustainable Energy Action Plans of the Capital Cities in South East Europe</i>					
Baseline Emission Inventory (BEI)	Zagreb	Skopje	Sarajevo	Podgorica	Tirana
Including building, transport and public lighting sectors	2810 ktCO ₂	1910 ktCO ₂	998 ktCO ₂	571,3 ktCO ₂	639,1 ktCO ₂
CO₂ reduction till 2020 (confirmed in the SEAP)	25,11%	23,19%	22,81%	21,49%	22,28%
Identified measures in SEAP (total)	59	39	39	47	42
Building sector	29	21	21	18	27
Transport sector	20	17	16	23	14
Public lighting sector	2	1	2	6	1
Expected CO₂ reduction after implementation of the SEAP planed measures	702.0 ktCO ₂	442.9 ktCO ₂	227.5 ktCO ₂	122.8 ktCO ₂	142.5 ktCO ₂
General note: Reduction numbers are approximations. Note for Tirana: The figures are preliminarily according to the draft of the SEAP. Note for Zagreb: The city has prepared an updated SEAP, which includes also the industry sector, and which should realize in total the reduction of 1 Mt CO ₂ emissions.					

Freiburg as a role model city

German city Freiburg im Breisgau engaged itself as a role-model in context of the projects as one of the leaders and pioneers in implementing a number of environmentally friendly measures, such as: installation of an early-warning system for smog and ozone pollution, recycling measures, transport policies and innovations in the field of environmental protection and solar engineering (photovoltaic) and, of course, energy efficiency.

Environmental policy, solar engineering, sustainability and climate protection concepts have become the mainstays of economic, political and urban development of Freiburg. In this context, the City of Freiburg offers experiences in the areas of SEAP development: energy aspects in city planning; traffic policy; RES (especially photovoltaic) and cogeneration; Capacity building and building of municipal structures; and ensuring professional exchange with relevant institutions and Freiburg experts.

During the last five years Freiburg's support changed with the development of the project. Signing of the MoU by the Mayor of Freiburg and his visit to Sarajevo for a Mayors' meeting were starting points. The presence of the Mayor at an early stage as well as technical lectures during Conferences about environmental policy served mainly as a motivation for the mayors and councillors of the capital cities.

The study tour in 2009 provided an opportunity for Mayors and Deputy-Mayors of Podgorica, Sarajevo, Skopje and Zagreb to get first-hand information on sustainable city planning, city energy policy planning and more ideas on how to address specific needs in their home cities.

Best practice examples showed how environmental policy has been implemented in different ways within Freiburg.

A workshop "From SEAP to Implementation" was the beginning of a more practical support at the working level. Meanwhile, the City of Freiburg actively participated in the future design of a follow-up project, acting as partner that offers experiences mostly in structural, organisational and process related issues for the municipalities.



City-Mayors-Study-Tour to the City of Freiburg took place in October 2009.



Freiburg, October 2009, Signing of the MoU for the project implementation "Capacity building for energy management in cities towards the goals of the CoM";



Lord Mayor Salomon (City of Freiburg) and Mayor Trajanovski (City of Skopje)

4. Conclusions

For the successful implementation of European energy policy, as well as national strategies and policies at the local level, municipal decision making plays a decisive role in the implementation processes. Furthermore, the experiences and lessons learnt within a group of Local Governments can be seen not only as worthy for other Local Governments, but also to some extent translatable towards Sustainable Energy policy issues at the national level.



Koce Trajanovski, Mayor of Skopje, presenting the Network of energy efficient capitals in Brussels and CoM Ceremony, June 2013

“The cities of Zagreb, Sarajevo, Skopje, Podgorica and Tirana have responsibly accepted their role in preserving our planet Earth, they are ready and they have the capacities and determination to act in mutual synergy in their respective regions for a sustainable future of the generations to come by sending a clear message:

The knowledge is not enough, we have to implement it. The intention is not enough, we have to act.”

Any success in the capital cities was based on the political commitment from the top; this means the Mayors, from energy issues responsible Vice Mayors as well as from the City Council. At the same time the topic was anchored within the cities’ administration. The Mayors, together with their city administrations, took efforts to introduce changes technically and structurally. The efficient use of energy and introducing the use of renewable energy sources are demanding issues because they are requiring a transition not only of technical systems, but also of habits, procedures, and organisational structures. Also, the capital cities faced a wide range of barriers and obstacles when they began to introduce new approaches.

While starting the elaboration of SEAPs, the collection of basic data relating to energy consumption for the Basic Emission Inventory (BEI) turned out as a big challenge for all cities. Some of the problems had to be solved by the direct engagement of the Mayors. For the future, the partner cities are very much aware that data collection and monitoring are the base for the further development of their approaches, and that well-ordered processes are crucial.

A number of challenges were related to existing city administration structures because new capacities for energy issues had to be established and introduced; different units had to figure out their (new) obligations and interest in the cross-sectoral topic “energy”. Additional education and trainings – also supported externally by the ORF-EE – helped to improve capacities and a better understanding for this

kind of comprehensive processes. It is not only a specific issue for cities in South East Europe, but also in the capitals; there of course is a lot of additional potential to upgrade their own capacities and deepen cooperation approaches across the different city departments.

Creating a more favourable environment for investment and realisation of the planned projects is an imperative. A huge challenge for all CoM cities, not just capitals, is the financing of measures and projects. This topic will be a very important issue in the future, too; from new models of financing, the activation of local and regional sources to joint projects at the European level.

Finally, the introduction of sustainability policies at a local level takes time and perseverance. Cooperation and Involvement of as many stakeholders as possible is one key for success.



Milan Bandić, Zagreb Mayor, at the Zagreb Energy Week 2012:

“Through our example and in cooperation with our distinguished partners, we want to show the citizens of the City of Zagreb, the Republic of Croatia and wider region the real possibilities for energy and financial savings, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the reduction of the harmful impact on the environment.”

The capitals represent a driving force for the political action required to confront the growing global issues of environmental protection and the creation of a new energy future for South East Europe. By providing support to smaller towns and their networking at the national level, the foundations are being laid for the creation of long-lasting cooperation between eco-friendly cities and municipalities. They actively cooperate with members of the network to achieve the objectives of the CoM, but also the general objectives of the countries of South East Europe in the field of sustainable energy use.

The capitals Zagreb, Skopje, Sarajevo, Podgorica and Tirana, supported by the City of Freiburg, have shown that initially existing political and cultural borders can be overcome. In this case they contribute to connect. In this regard, Capitals can serve as a positive example in their own country. Regional exchange and benchmarking of excellence can contribute to local development as a precondition for strong development, but also towards a European integration process.

Authors' Profiles

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