

LIBERAL INITIATIVES TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

AT THE LOCAL AND REGIONAL
LEVEL



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RAKVERE (ESTONIA): 2009-2019, "10 YEARS OF COVENANT OF MAYORS – BEST PRACTICES IN EUROPE"

After the signature of the Covenant of Mayors, the Estonian city of Rakvere became a leader and through the adoption of its Sustainable Energy Action Plan in order to meet EU climate and energy targets.

The city Rakvere became in ten years a pioneer in energy efficiency in buildings, the Rakvere SmartHouse is the first public nearly-zero-energy building in Estonia, through the utilization of different building automation technologies and different sustainable energy sources such as solar panels and geothermal heating pumps.

The new heating district of Rakvere moved from fossil fuels to biofuels produced with wood waste and one of the first of eco-friendly green school in Estonia, located in Rakevere, uses only renewable materials.

The success stories of Rakvere in the use of renewable energies, the rise of energy efficiency to ensure the clean energy transition as well as waste reduction and management show us a great example of how a city can become a leader by becoming a Smart City.

Between 2009 and 2019, more than 47 million € have been invested to finance green projects such as the Rakvere Smart City Hall specialized in the development of intelligent and smart technologies for the use of home and office equipment, automated building systems as well as building management.

DUN LAOGHAIRE RATHDOWN COUNTY (IRELAND): ROCHESTOWN HOUSE - SOCIAL HOUSING PROJECT



Kate FEENEY
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Dun Laoghaire Rathdown
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The Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council (DLRCC) aims to create a better-quality built environment for all, through the delivery of high-quality architecture, advocating low energy building design, promoting sustainability and encouraging innovation.

In this way DLRCC is leading the way in finding solutions to the climate change by successfully dealing with environmental, social and economic sustainability of new and existing buildings and landbank.

The refurbishment of the Council group housing scheme "Rochestown House", was chosen to be the Irish demonstration project of the EuroPHit (European Pilot scheme).

It has obtained the EnerPHit certification (Passive House standard for retrofits) in January 2019 after the completion of its retrofit, becoming hereby first social housing scheme in Ireland to achieve this standard that recognize the combination of optimum thermal comfort, maximum energy efficiency and minimum running costs.

This approach, built on three key words, "Reuse, Re-adapt and Densify", contributes significantly towards energy conservation and climate protection, while increasing the value of property at the same time. This project brought several benefits in terms of environmental, social and economic issues and can be used as a model in the future.



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NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA (GERMANY): REDUCING EMISSIONS IN THE ENERGY- INTENSIVE INDUSTRY WITH INNOVATIONS AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Home to a disproportionately high share of energy-intensive industry, this region emitted about 1/3 of Germany's overall greenhouse gas emissions. Having already reached their 25% GHG emission reduction goals for 2020, the government of North Rhine-Westphalia aims an 80% reduction for 2050.

To reach such an ambitious target, GHG-neutral production and the fabrication of climate-friendly products are required. An example would be steel production: process gases can be converted into chemical products or coking coal could be substituted by hydrogen, which would reduce CO₂ emissions tremendously.

The new initiative "IN4climate.NRW" fosters research and innovation for CO₂-emission reduction in the energy-intensive industry. Participating partners of the initiative are the state government, industry and scientific research institutes. In the course of time, also civil society, associations and start-ups will be integrated into the process.



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Experts from these stakeholders are brought together to jointly identify promising fields of research and innovation, initiate and develop new research projects, foster cross-sectoral cooperation, work on economic and technical strategies for preserving the competitiveness of the industry location North Rhine-Westphalia while taking into consideration the regulatory and political frameworks needed for this transition.

Meanwhile, the initiative „In4Climate“, financed by the state government of North Rhine-Westphalia, spawned five best practice projects, which is only the beginning.

For example, ThyssenKrupp a big steel producer reached an important step to GHG-neutral steel production. Instead of coal dust, hydrogen is used in the blast furnace. Together with the CAT Catalytic Center and the RWTH Aachen, the enterprise Covestro has developed a process for the use of carbon dioxide as a raw material for the production of plastics. These are just two examples of innovative industry projects from "IN4climate.NRW" to create a climate-neutral economy.

CASTILE AND LEÓN (SPAIN) : NEW BOOST TO ELECTRIC RENEWABLES IN CASTILLA Y LEÓN



Francisco IGEA ARISQUETA
(ES/Renew Europe)
Vice-president of the
Government of Castile
and León

Electric renewables account for 78% of the total installed electric capacity in Castilla y León. Wind power covers 81% of the electricity demand, as an average, with peaks over 90%. In a year, installed capacity in our Region will increase by 915 MW in wind and 300 MW in photovoltaics.

These new developments in electric renewables capacity will more than offset the closure of the four coal fired generation plants (2.457 MW) in the region, expected by mid 2020.

In economic terms, the new wind developments in the region, solely, will mean an investment of 842 M€, 2.640 jobs during construction and commissioning, 2,5 M€ in land rentals, 21 M€ in municipal licenses and 3,7 M€ per year in municipal taxes. There is no similar support to the economy of rural areas by any other sector of activity.

With an installed capacity of 10.534 MW, Castilla y León share in the Spanish electric renewables capacity is 22%. As an average, electric renewables cover 149% of the electricity demand in the Region (14.056 GWh) compared to an average of 37% in Spain.

In the short and medium term, Castilla y León expects a huge growth in electric renewables, with an outlook of new 6.400 MW of installed capacity, fundamentally in photovoltaics and wind. Moreover, Spain will be able to meet its 2020 European goals in renewables thanks to the contribution from Castilla y León.

MECHELEN (BELGIUM): PERSONALISED GUIDANCE PROGRAMME FOR HOUSEHOLD RENOVATION



Bart SOMERS
(BE/Renew Europe)
Vice minister-president of
the Flemish Government

Bart Somers, Mayor of the city of Mechelen and CoR member, has engaged the Flemish city into several innovative projects in the field of sustainability. One of these initiatives is the project "See2Do!", a Flanders-Netherlands cross-border project funded by the EU's Interreg program.

Since 2016, numerous residents visited the public demonstration building (100+ via a tour), 220 residents received a personalized renovation coaching at home and 650 residents received a personal thermal picture of their roof (10.000+ visited the online portal). 55% of participants renovated their homes and this led to an average annual carbon footprint reduction of 2,3 ton CO₂ per participating household.

Currently, the city builds on the lessons learned of this project and integrates renovation coaching as a standard service for citizens.

ISTRIA (CROATIA): EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO DRIVE CHANGE



Valter FLEGO
(HR/Renew Europe)
Prefect of the County of Istria

The Croatian county of Istria demonstrates how coordinated actions and communication are an essential basis to fight climate change and adapt to global warming.

In collaboration with the Istrian Regional Energy Agency (IRENA), the county has established an Information System for Energy Management (ISGE) to monitor the water and energy performance of public buildings. The system contains data for the general, structural and energetic characteristics of each building. It monitors and compares energy and water bills, identifying excessive consumption and measures for improved performance. Coupled with education and trainings, the county has set up competent teams capable of planning and managing energy consumption in public buildings, including schools, hospitals and schools.

Istria is also proud of the results of the EU project ALTERENERGY to promote energy efficiency in small communities. The project included the installation of a Hybrid geothermal-solar heating system in the “Grdelin” kindergarten in Buzet, the first of its kind in Croatia.

Through the EU project EMPOWERING, Istria has now completed CO2 emissions’ inventories in the towns of Buzet, Labin, Novigrad, Pazin, Pula, Poreč, Rovinj and Vodnjan. Identifying the main sources of emissions is the first step for public authorities to build integrated sustainable energy strategies.