

European Conference on Local Energy Action

The Annual Event for Energy Management Agencies in Europe
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Conclusions from Day 1 of the Conference

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European level

1. The proposed European constitution will, unlike the existing Treaties, include an Energy chapter. This is important since it means that new energy activities may in future be initiated without the need for justification based on Treaty articles concerning research and the environment. Energy is now recognized as of great importance in its own right.
2. The best way to increase the security of energy supply is through energy saving. Controlling demand decreases the need for the infrastructure associated with conventional energy sources and increases opportunities for Renewables. The greater the contribution of Renewables, the easier it is to manage energy demand independently of world markets and prices. Recognition of this automatically means that Europe should move in the direction of energy saving and demand management. This requires global policies that can then be implemented through local action.
3. The urgent need was emphasised to adopt the fine detail of the Lisbon declaration. If we wish to create a more dynamic and sustainable community, create more and better jobs, and higher economic growth rates, we have to act at local level. Local actions can contribute more to the global objectives than action at any other level.
4. We have heard that the European Parliament will monitor energy in the same way as is being done for telecommunications activities. This is pleasing, since the more importance given to energy, the better it will be for energy action at the local level. Hence, it is very important to consider the European dimension of such local action in weighing the relative priority to be given to the various activities we try to promote between yourselves (the Energy Agencies and other local and regional energy actors) and us (the Commission).

Local and regional level

The municipalities understand that they are expected to undertake activities in the energy field. Hence, the proper place has to be found for energy actions within the town hall agenda. Intelligent Energy – Europe and ManagEnergy will provide valuable support for these activities through local and regional energy agencies and other local energy actors. These in turn will support municipalities in defining their input on energy matters within their policy mix.

As far as Renewables are concerned, the decisions to establish new renewable based energy production plants, or energy consuming entities are made at various levels. These may reflect local, regional or national policies. Major barriers to adopting renewable energy appear at all levels. Hence, in order to achieve the Community's objectives it is

necessary for various actors to deal with ‘packages of barriers’ through remedies that they are promoting in their everyday work at local and regional levels.

In relation to the transport sector, the way cities are adopting new initiatives is an essential factor in reducing energy consumption in the transport sector. This includes urban and inter-urban planning. Ways of reducing the negative impact of transport have to include concrete actions such as mobility management and the definition of goals for future action. This local action has to continue with further capacity-building actions.

Accession & Candidate Countries

It is clear that we cannot transpose solutions directly from the existing EU Member States to the new countries entering the EU next year. Specific targeted action is necessary. Hence, it would be beneficial if activities undertaken at local level in the present Member States were to contribute to the definition of instruments for the new Member States. In future global thinking, particular attention should be given to considering how to convince local authorities to work on energy projects on the basis of experience gained from those which have already produced useful results.