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Cities: largest are smartest and best for Europe

The EU's new smart cities and communities initiative will provide fertile ground for Europe's cities to drive forward development. Its focus must however remain with biggest urban areas to have the best possible impact.

Because cities are responsible for the main share of emissions in Europe, they are best placed to deliver solutions. The new scheme launched today in Brussels will help them combine technical change with economic and organisational innovation to increase energy efficiency across all aspects of urban life.

Ahead of the launch, EURO CITIES secretary general Paul Bevan, said:

"Bigger cities offer a critical mass for large-scale 'smart measures' that really make a difference. Investing in its biggest cities promises the EU greater results more quickly and more visibly to all."

Smart cities integrate state-of-the-art green technologies for greater sustainability and offer higher living standards. EURO CITIES believes that success depends on responding to market demand in order to maximise the chances of take-up and transferability:

"Smart cities & communities should not operate as a supply-led initiative dominated by interests of producers. Smart solutions are about responding to the real needs of people," added Alexandra van Huffelen, Vice-Mayor of Rotterdam.

Many cities have already developed ambitious climate action plans but are constrained by the lack of finance and technological capacity. Mayor of Berlin, Klaus Wowereit said:

"There is a significant gap between cities' resources and what is needed to fund effective climate change programmes. Current EU schemes are underfunded and often hampered by fragmentation. We want the smart cities initiative to offer up more flexible funding arrangements."

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Note to Editors

- EURO CITIES is the network of major European cities: www.eurocities.eu
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