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Green cities for Europe's growth

Europe's cities stand ready to deliver 'green growth' by fostering jobs and wealth creation while reducing carbon footprints. That was the message of a meeting in Copenhagen today between EU climate commissioner Connie Hedegaard and mayors of leading EU cities.

Recognised around the world for pioneering climate action, European mayors insist it is both possible and profitable for the EU to meet economic needs while advancing environmental priorities. By concentrating population and providing the critical mass for innovation in resource efficiency, cities offer the most sustainable form of development for the future.

At today's meeting Frank Jensen, Mayor of Copenhagen and president of EUROCITIES said:

"Europe will never meet targets for climate action and economic growth without smart solutions from cities, citizens and businesses. City mayors are uniquely placed to lead this change in how we live, work and travel. It's essential that the EU and our national governments support us more strongly in these efforts."

As of June 2011, the EU's internationally renowned Covenant of Mayors had attracted some 2,700 signatories, local mayors all committed to cutting CO2 emissions by and beyond 20% by 2020. Referring to the initiative's success, commissioner Hedegaard said:

"While the international negotiations are moving forward at depressingly slow speed, it is extremely encouraging to observe how much is going on at other levels. Cities have huge potential to involve their citizens and businesses in green growth, to innovate, test new solutions and bring them to the market."

Across Europe, cities are demonstrating the financial and social gains of sustainable approaches by creating programmes in partnership with universities, technologists and the private sector. Copenhagen's goal to become the world's first carbon-neutral capital by 2025, for example, is supported by practical plans ranging across transport, health, energy, industry and the service sector.

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Note to Editors

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