



City Profile

Skopje



CASCADE Cities exchanging on
local energy leadership



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Introduction

Skopje is the capital of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) with a population of 506,926 over an area of 1,818 km². As the largest city in FYROM, it represents a political administrative, economic, cultural, educational and research hub, with a GDP of €5,080. Skopje has seen significant progress encouraged by the shift from production industries to service activities and thanks to large foreign investments. Skopje's vision is to be a developed cultural, historical, conference, and sporting-recreational tourist centre, whose inhabitants have an enhanced ecological awareness.

To create an energy-efficient and ecologically friendly living environment for Skopje's citizens, the city first started to reorganise its structure by establishing a unit for energy, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources. The tasks of this unit are to create measures and implement activities that will encourage authorities and citizens to save electricity, use renewable energy sources, use public transport, build energy-efficient private and public buildings and enforce the use of energy-efficient lighting. For the successful realisation of activities, the unit works closely with the Spatial Planning and Organisation Department, the Nature and Environment Protection Department, the Traffic Department and the Communal Affairs Department in the city's administration.



Skopje signed the Covenant of Mayors in 2010 and submitted its Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) in 2011. According to the documents adopted, the city of Skopje's goal is to achieve a CO₂-emission reduction of more than 20% in the period 2009-2020 by implementing projects for energy-efficient buildings, transport and public lighting.

Energy-Efficient Buildings and Districts

The city of Skopje is working in accordance with the national strategy for energy efficiency and with Skopje's action plan for sustainable energy development for energy efficiency in buildings and districts. The city administration established an information centre for energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources. It was established to give citizens the opportunity to find out about:

- technical solutions
- fundraising
- legislation and regulations
- energy-efficient construction materials and their use
- information, promotion of actions and incentives put forward by the central and local government
- training and capacity building for the city administration
- presentation and demonstration of SME products in front of citizens.

In the city's 2012-2013 action plan for energy efficiency in public buildings, the renovation of roofs, installation of highly energy-efficient windows and new lighting systems in 21 public schools and eight cultural institutions are planned. In the past two years, a few energy-efficient measures have been implemented in ten public schools, such as roof insulation, installation of windows, façade insulation and a new lighting system. Activities to refurbish the public schools and cultural institutions to convert them into energy-efficient buildings will continue in the next two years.

The city of Skopje uses HABITAT II funds together with incentives from municipalities to start a reconstruction initiative for private buildings based on energy efficiency requirements. As it becomes more and more popular, citizens increasingly request that kind of funds to renovate their flats using energy-efficient solutions.

Renewable Energy Sources and Distributed Generation

The Council of the city of Skopje adopted a programme for energy efficiency in November 2012 which includes the use of renewable energy sources.

Potential renewable energy sources in Skopje are solar energy, biomass energy, combined heat and power generation and heat pumps. Skopje has recently started to use solar energy for public lighting. For example, solar-powered lighting has been installed on Vodno mountain in the recreational section. Also, in July 2012, the first solar mobile phone charger was promoted in the city centre.

This is just a start of the city's actions regarding renewable energy sources. The city aims to set a good example for citizens in its use of renewable energy sources.



Energy in Urban Transport

In Skopje, it is assumed that the vitality and prosperity of a city relies on the quality of mobility, both of people and products. That is why the city of Skopje's goal is to transform the transport system into one that will satisfy the collective economic, social and ecological needs, while minimising undesirable economic, social and ecological effects. In the past, the city has worked on studies and plans to achieve its goals. Examples of these actions include the action plan for sustainable energy development, the sustainable urban mobility plan and the local ecological action plan.

As a partner in the EU-funded project RENAISSANCE, the city of Skopje (in a partnership with PE "JSP" - Skopje) has implemented the following sustainable measures:

- adopting sustainable urban transport plan
- retrofitting 12 public transport vehicles from diesel to CNG

- implementing the real-time passenger information system at 12 bus stops
- outfitting two bus lines and 40 busses with GPS
- introducing the AVL system in public transport. In 2013 the AVL system will be implemented at all bus stops and in all buses.

The measures are also supported by RENAISSANCCE project funds. Funds from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), too, support the implementation of the Adaptive Traffic Management System at 100 crossings. The traffic monitor and management centre will be established in 2013. The main objective of this measure is to help alleviate the heavy traffic congestion and pollution in the central area of Skopje by establishing the traffic management and control centre. This centre will enable traffic control managers to monitor and control in real time the critical city centre intersections by controlling the traffic lights and by using variable message signs for the purpose of traffic flow management. Priority measures for public transport vehicles will also be included.



During 2010, Skopje implemented a rent-a-bike system in the city. Together with a public enterprise for parking, five bike stations were established and more than 150 bikes are in use. The system is well accepted by the citizens but also by tourists and visitors. The plan for 2013 is to buy 100 additional bikes. To improve the system, the city has started twinning partnerships for the implementation of a new smart system for the rent-a-bike scheme as it exists in other European cities.

In the past, the city of Skopje has also realised projects such as a zone parking system, new bicycle lanes, walking paths, a ropeway, and renewal of the bus fleet for public transportation and a 'ride a bike' campaign.

In 2013, the City will work on concession contracting for the implementation of trams and for a gas pipeline construction concession.

Considering the opportunities offered by being a network member, the City of Skopje has been part of the following networks:

- CIVITAS
- Sustainable cities network
- Covenant of Mayor's network
- Green digital charter network
- and others

Financing

The city of Skopje has realised several energy and transport projects. These projects were financed by EU Programmes FP7 and IPA, loans from EBRD,

the Government of FYROM, city budget, business banks and donations.

For example, the EU Programmes FP7 and a loan from EBRD finance the Centre for Traffic Management and Control. The IPA and city budget financed the project Reconstruction of City Cultural Institutions Youth Cultural Centre - Skopje. The Government of FYROM financed the renewal of the bus fleet for public transportation, while the installation of solar-powered lighting on Vodno mountain was financed by the city budget.

Future Visions and Expectations

The city of Skopje has no direct competences in the field of climate change. However, the range of measures for mitigating and adapting to climate change are varied. In the near future, the city will work on preparing a strategy for adapting to climate change impacts in the city of Skopje as well as a study on environmental capacity assessment and a calculation of the city of Skopje's ecological footprint.





Wuppertal Institute
for Climate, Environment
and Energy

Doepfersberg 19
42103 Wuppertal
GERMANY

City of Skopje
F.Y.R.O.M.



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