

Regional and Local Energy Agencies Europe's Enablers of the Renovation Wave

Dear President Ursula von der Leyen,
Dear Executive Vice-President Frans Timmermans,
Dear Commissioner Kadri Simson,
Dear Commissioner Elisa Ferreira,
Dear Commissioner Paolo Gentiloni,

We are writing to you as representatives of European regions and regional and local energy agencies which for decades have been the European Union's partners in making our green transition happen on the ground. As the coronavirus crisis continues to affect the lives of citizens and Europe's economy, we believe the Renovation Wave can become a Recovery Wave, setting us on the track towards achieving our 2030 climate goals.

Over 320 local and regional Energy Agencies from across Europe, representing a total workforce of 2500 energy experts, stand ready to translate the Renovation Wave into concrete programmes that leverage massive investments to renovate buildings, integrate renewables, embed circularity, guarantee high health standards and support the move to digitisation.

More than 250 of these Energy Agencies were created by the European Commission through the SAVE and IEE programmes from 1991 to 2008 in order to encourage the development of expertise in tackling energy policy implementation challenges at local and regional levels.

The **energy agency facilitation model** has been behind some of the most ambitious regional energy efficiency policies and renovation programmes in Europe. Energy agencies are market facilitators with public mandates, providing technical assistance to municipalities, regions, companies and citizens, having the ability to connect stakeholders and governance levels as well as experience in structuring financing models with multiple funding streams.

While their expertise and staying power could maximise the impact of the "renovation wave", this capacity has not developed uniformly across Europe and requires further re-enforcement and resources. To this end, the members of FEDARENE would recommend the following key actions:

1. The continuation and upscaling of the Commission's ManagEnergy service, with its focus on promoting the local/regional Energy Agency facilitation model through in-depth capacity building on market facilitation, project aggregation, engagement of financial institutions, mobilisation of private investments, development of financial instruments. This facilitation model has already leveraged significant large scale investments evidenced by results from the ManagEnergy service.
2. Embed the local/regional Energy Agency facilitation model in the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Directives to maximise the impact of their provisions. This legal

recognition would acknowledge the reality of this driver for sustainable energy, sending a signal to Member States to support the upscaling and replication of this facilitation model. Many national authorities still fail to use local and regional energy agencies to their full potential or even disregard them in the design and implementation of their sustainable energy policies. Unless the energy agency facilitation model is recognised and resourced, ambitious concepts/investments at local and regional level will not be translated into realised energy and carbon savings.

3. Include local and regional energy agencies in the setting up of standardised one-stop shops at regional or local levels for delivering tailored advice and financing solutions designed to accompany homeowners, public authorities or SMEs throughout the preparation and implementation of their projects. Many Energy Agencies across Europe have already started developing such integrated renovation services but require support to upscale and engage in cross-European replication of these services.
4. Include local and regional energy agencies in all the relevant Commission Expert Groups, using these enablers as a sounding board for the Commission's policies relative to sustainable energy and cohesion.
5. Strengthen the emphasis of EU's funding programmes on market initiation and activation projects such as the Coordination and Support Actions of the post-2021 LIFE programme. CSA projects on clean energy helped regions, cities and communities to transform their environmental and climate ambitions into action. They enabled to stimulate local economic development, create jobs, increase demand and supply for energy efficiency services and products, implement and upscale renewable energy projects, develop the first adaptation strategies, alleviate energy poverty, improve air quality and truly inform and empower citizens and local initiatives.

We strongly believe regional and local energy agencies can further develop into the European Commission's territorial anchors, ensuring European policies achieve their full potential in improving the life of citizens, achieving carbon neutrality and building a sustainable society.

FEDARENE, the European Federation of Agencies and Regions for Energy and the Environment, welcomes the opportunity to meet and discuss these issues, in view of consolidating its role of bringing Europe and its regions closer together in their common transition towards clean and efficient energy.

Yours sincerely,

Julije Domac

President of FEDARENE

On behalf of the Members of FEDARENE



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