

1.1. ANALYSIS OF THE COVENANT OF MAYORS IN THE VALENCIA REGION (SPAIN) AND THE HELSINKI-UUSIMAA REGION (FINLAND) WITH PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

The Covenant of Mayors is the main initiative of the European Commission to engage local authorities in climate change mitigation. It was adopted in 2008 and its impact on the different regions of Europe varies due to several factors. The paper evaluates the performance of the Covenant of Mayors in the Helsinki-Uusimaa region and in the Valencia region. The research outlines that the Covenant of Mayors has worked differently in the Helsinki-Uusimaa region and in Valencia region. Finally, a set of recommendations and actions are proposed to improve the impact of the Covenant of Mayors in both regions. Since enhancing the Covenant of Mayors could be a new sector for collaboration between both regions, some joint actions are also recommended.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Covenant of Mayors (CoM) was launched by the European Commission (EC) after the adoption of the European Union (EU) climate and energy package (2008). The Covenant of Mayors aims to mobilise local and regional actors to fulfil the European Union objectives about climate change mitigation and sustainable energy promotion.

In October 2015, 6530 local and regional authorities had signed the Covenant of Mayors, committing to achieve and exceed the European Union 20% greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction objective by 2020. The signatory authorities represent approximately 210,000 inhabitants. Due to the large number of signatories, the Covenant of Mayors is the main European movement engaging local and regional authorities.

A wide range of actors can participate in the Covenant of Mayors: local authorities, regional or province authorities as well as associations of local authorities and private actors such as Not Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and industrial associations. Notwithstanding, only local authorities (municipalities) are engaged in the full process to measure and reduce CO₂ emissions. Other actors can mainly participate with a supporting role, in order to enlarge the number of Covenant of Mayors signatories and provide advisory service or economical support to local authorities to achieve their CO₂ reduction goals. In Finland, there two main supporting actors: the association of Finnish municipalities and regions and the Union of the Baltic Cities (specially the Union of the Baltic Cities Sustainable Cities Commission, based in Turku).

Under the terms of the Covenant of Mayors, local authorities have to undertake the following main steps:

- Signing the Covenant of Mayors, with the approval of the municipal council.
- Preparing and submitting the baseline emission inventory and the Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) to the Covenant of Mayors.
- Implementing the SEAP and submitting regular monitoring reports.

Furthermore, the Covenant of Mayors selects and disseminates “best practices”. This initiative is named “Benchmarks of excellence”.

Since the Covenant of Mayors has been playing a key role to promote engagement of European local authorities in climate change mitigation, other European Union initiatives have prioritized the promotion of the Covenant of Mayors and the support to local authorities in the preparation and implementation of the Sustainable Energy Action Plans.

In this regard, since the Covenant of Mayors is the main European Commission initiative for Local Authorities commitment in mitigation, it is worth analysing the performance of the Covenant of Mayors, identifying improvement needs in order to ensure the compliance of the Covenant of Mayors steps and objectives as well as the coordination with other initiatives. Therefore the research aimed to evaluate the engagement of the Valencia and Helsinki-Uusimaa local authorities in the Covenant of Mayors, delineating practical action proposals to promote the Covenant of Mayors in these regions.

The geographical scope of the research is limited to the regions of Valencia and Helsinki-Uusimaa. Both regions are involved in the Climate KIC (one of three Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) created in 2010 by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)) and the research has been carried out within the framework of the Climate KIC initiative “Pioneers into Practice” (PiP).

2 Methodology

The methodology of the research included the literature review about the Covenant of Mayors and the critical review of the SEAPs of the signatory local authorities from the Valencia and Helsinki-Uusimaa regions. Furthermore, interviews were held with key actors: executives and technicians of the Association of municipalities of the Valencia region; technicians of the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities. Meetings were held also with executives and technicians of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council. Finally, a questionnaire was submitted to the Helsinki-Uusimaa municipalities that have not signed the Covenant of Mayors.

The review of the SEAPs of the signatory local authorities (LA) from the Valencia and Helsinki-Uusimaa regions was carried out in order to evaluate the "quality" of the LA engagement in the Covenant of Mayors and to identify best practices. In this regard, it should be mentioned that the research is not confined solely to identify general trends, but rather endeavours to evaluate the feature, especially, of the SEAPs. Research had no access to the information of Espoo Sustainable Energy Action Plans in English.

A set of criteria has been previously concerted in order to evaluate the "quality" of the SEAPs and to identify best practices between the actions foreseen by the SEAPs, within the geographical scope of the research. The criteria are related to sustainability principles, gender mainstreaming, participation and innovation. Innovation related criteria are four because the research has been developed within the framework of the Climate-Kic programme, whose purpose is closely connected to innovations in the climate change mitigation and adaptation. Furthermore, there are criteria referring to the impact in mitigation, as well as the step and benchmarks in the Covenant of Mayors. The detailed analysis is presented in the annex 1. To ensure the understanding of the analysis, hereafter the methodology of evaluation of each criteria is explained.

Criteria	Description	Rating
Step of the Covenant of Mayors	The score is related to the step of the Covenant of Mayors that the LA has achieved.	Score is 1 if the LA has just signed the Covenant of Mayors, 2 if LA has submitted the SEAP to the Covenant of Mayors, 3 if LA has submitted the SEAP follow up reports to the Covenant of Mayors.
Benchmarked by the Covenant of Mayors	The Covenant of Mayors has its own benchmarking process to highlight "excellent" practices in the SEAPs. Practices that are benchmarked by the Covenant of Mayors have a higher score.	Score is 1 if the LA was benchmarked by the Covenant of Mayors. 0, if not.
CO2 reduction by 2020	The Covenant of Mayors commits local authorities to achieve or exceed the European Union 20% greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction objective by 2020. Thus, the score depends on the reduction of the SEAP.	If the SEAP foresees a reduction of 20 to 39% of the CO2 emissions, the score is 1; if 40 to 59%, the score is 2; if 60 to 79%, 3; in 80 to 100 %, 4.
New technology application.	As an aspect of innovation, the application of new technology in the SEAP is well rated.	If the SEAP includes new technology application, the score is 1.
Dissemination potential according to the cost	Dissemination is an important aspect of innovation. A practice is easy to be disseminated (and implemented by other local authorities) if its cost is lower.	If the cost of the considered practice is 0 to 15,000 €, the score is 4; 15,000 to 30000, the score is 3; 30,000 to 50,000, the score is 2; if the cost is more than 50,000, the score is 1.

Dissemination potential according to technology.	Dissemination is a important aspect of innovation. A practice is easy to be disseminated (and implemented by other local authorities) if its technology is accessible and easy handling.	If the technology used in the practices of the SEAP is very easy to disseminate (very accessible and very easy to hand), the score is 4; accessible and easy to hand, score 3; there are difficulties to access and not so easy to hand, score 2; Very difficult to access and to hand, score 1.
Citizen's participation	The Citizen's participation in elaborating and implementing the SEAPs is very important to insure the acceptance, actual implementation and efficacy of the plans. The participation includes citizens, associations and NGOs, for profit.	If participation has been ensured, 1 point; otherwise 0.
Win-win solution (not only mitigation, also economic savings or social impact or other positive impacts.	No carbon benefits are a key factor for mitigation actions. For example, actions than generate savings and CO2 reduction, are more likely to be successfully implemented. "Win-win" solutions can include an economical positive impact; a social positive impact; environmental positive impact (for ex. promoting biodiversity) or other positive impacts.	In addition to carbon emissions reduction, also one more benefit: score 1; two more benefits: score 2; three more benefits: score 3).
Multi-actors	Local authorities are the leaders of the SEAPs in their territory, but for large CO2 reductions other sectors (enterprises, households, other state organizations, etc.) should be engaged or encouraged to decrease their emissions. Collaborations with private partners, households, etc. can spread the impact of SEAPs. Therefore, SEAPs that foresee multi-actors collaboration for the implementation, obtain a better score.	If the considered practice of the SEAP promotes the collaboration with 1 additional actor (for type of actors, for example: households), then the score is 1. With 2 actors, the score is 2; if >2 actors, the score is 4. If no collaboration is promoted by the SEAP, the score is 0.
Economic sustainability.	As a principle of sustainability, economic issues are considered to evaluate SEAPs.	If the considered practice of the SEAP generates economical savings, the score is 1. If it generates revenues, the score is 2.
Social sustainability, It gives social benefits	As principle of sustainability, social impact is considered to evaluate SEAPs.	If the considered practice of the SEAP has a social impact, the score if 1; otherwise, it is 0.
Gender mainstreaming	An integration of gender equality promotion in climate change mitigation is a key issue to achieve CO2 decrease.	If the considered practice of the SEAP has a positive impact on gender equality, the score is 1. Otherwise is 0.

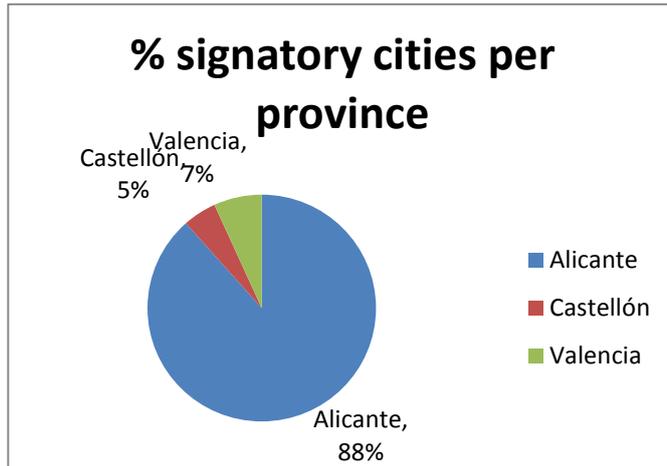
Innovation (1 few innovator - 4 very innovator)	An overall evaluation of the degree of innovation is required, as this aspect is quite important. Innovative methodologies, citizen's engagement systems, contribution to sharing economy, circular economy are rated in a scale 1 to 4.	If the SEAP is considered less significantly innovative to a very significantly innovative on a scale 1 (less innovator) to 4 (most innovator).
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Each criteria for each Sustainable Energy Action Plans has been rated by the main researcher, analyzing all activities of each plan. Therefore, the scoring process was based on the evaluation of the researcher, according to his personal perception. In spite of such a grade of subjectivity, it is worth mentioning that the evaluation is supported by the analysis of the actions of the Plans and the score can be justified when referring to features of the Plan. Occasionally, in case of doubts, rating was discussed by the researcher with employees of the association of the Valencia municipalities and regions.

3 COVENANT OF MAYORS IN VALENCIA REGION

3.1 Overall involvement of Valencia local authorities in Covenant of Mayors

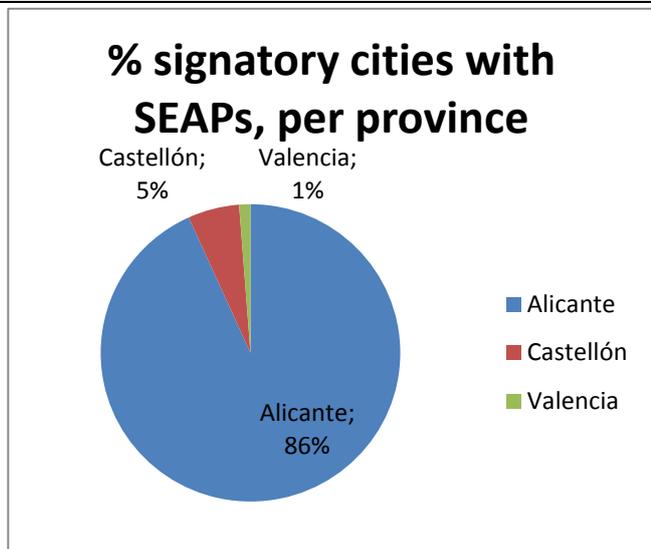
The Covenant of Mayors agreement has been **signed by the 27 % of Valencian local authorities**, less than the % of Italy, for example (38% of all Italian municipalities has signed the Covenant of Mayors), but is still one of the higher % in Europe.



The % of signatories depends on the province, with huge differences between Valencia, Castellón and Alicante. **In the Alicante province, 93 % of local authorities has signed the Covenant of Mayors; in Castellón and Valencia only 5 % and 4 % signed it** and these % are quite lower than in most of the European countries %. The Alicante provincial authority (Diputación provincial de Alicante) supported financially (with grants) the elaboration of the SEAP, encouraging especially small local authorities to sign the Covenant of Mayors. The incentives explain the differences between provinces.

authorities in Covenant of Mayors

3.2 Involvement quality of Valencia local



Although the grants of the Alicante provincial authority have increased the number of signatories, this situation caused some distortions, too. In addition to the provincial differences in the amount of signatories, the analysis has detected an **overall low quality of the involvement in the performance of the Valencian local authorities**.

Firstly, most of the Valencian municipalities presented the SEAP but they have not done the follow-up. The results have not been monitored and there is lack of information about the effectiveness of the Plans. **Actually only 3% of the municipalities have presented the monitoring reports to the Covenant of Mayors**. It is worth mentioning that the Alicante provincial authority has not financed the monitoring

step. It could explain why most of the local authorities limited their involvement at the step 2 (SEAP presentation). As only a few local authorities submitted monitoring reports, it is very difficult to evaluate the implementation and efficacy of these plans.

The “quality” of the involvement of the Valencian municipalities can be evaluated also by an SEAP analysis. **Very few actions of the Sustainable Energy Action Plans have been selected by the “Benchmarking” mechanism of the Covenant of Mayors** (4 local authorities have been selected) and those selected are very expensive actions, difficult to be replicated. Furthermore, according to the analysis of the SEAP (according to a set of criteria related to innovation, impact, public-private collaboration, etc.), there is **few innovative practices**. Most of the actions of the SEAP are the refurbishment of municipal buildings, the introducing LED lightening and other actions not being that innovative. The SEAP have been elaborated by external consultants and some of them have prepared SEAPs for many municipalities, proposing the same actions for several

municipalities, affecting innovation of the Plans. The similarity of many plans suggests that the participation of politicians, technicians and citizens has been limited.

Good and interesting practices are related to:

International collaboration with other municipalities in order to promote know how and green technology transfers ("Green twinings" are an example), green local taxes or green local taxes exceptions, promotion of car sharing and bike pooling, green criteria for public procurement, green energy purchase for municipal buildings, energy manager for municipality and local commerce, Public Private Partnership for street lighting facilities refurbishment. These practices should be strengthened and replicated.

4 COVENANT OF MAYORS IN HELSINKI-UUSIMAA REGION

4.1 Overall involvement of Helsinki-Uusimaa local authorities in Covenant of Mayors

The Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council has 26 municipalities, with a population of 1,6 million people, which is more than a quarter of the country's total population. 3 municipalities have signed the Covenant of Mayors: Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa (12% of the Helsinki-Uusimaa municipalities). Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa have 1,058,465 inhabitants, which is approximately 66 % of the total inhabitants of the region and almost 20% of total population of Finland. Therefore, the number of signatory municipalities is quite low but the coverage in term of the population is high, because most of the inhabitants of the region live in the signatory cities. It is worth to highlight this data because the SEAPs of Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa affect emissions of most of the Helsinki-Uusimaa inhabitants.

According to the data of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council in 2014; Espoo registered 5,3 CO₂ eq. tons per capita/per year, Vantaa 5,8 and Helsinki 4,5. Therefore, the GHG reduction potential of their SEAPs is high.

However, the % of signatories in the region can be considered quite low. The low % of Covenant of Mayors signatories is a common trend in all Finland (10 municipalities are members of the Covenant of Mayors in all the country, 3 % of the total number of municipalities) and it is worth examining the causes of this trend.

In order to investigate the causes of the low %, a questionnaire was submitted to the municipalities that have not signed the Covenant of Mayors in the region of Helsinki-Uusimaa. 13 % of the local authorities answered the questionnaire, and 100% of the respondents declared that they did not know about the Covenant of Mayors. Despite the limitation of the survey (the low % of respondents), it is possible to outline a general pattern: the Covenant of Mayors is not widely known by the municipalities of the Helsinki-Uusimaa region, even though Finnish supporting actors, such as the Association of Finnish municipalities and regions, have been implementing actions to raise awareness about the Covenant of Mayors.

According to the survey, the local authorities have an interest in the climate change local policies, since most of them already have climate change mitigation or adaptation local plans. Actually, 67 % of the respondents have a plan to improve energy efficiency and promote energy renewable sources. Climate change adaptation also is a priority for the Local Authorities since 67 % of the respondents have a plan to promote climate change adaptation or include adaptation in other planning processes. Therefore, climate change is a priority for the Local Authorities in Helsinki-Uusimaa region and the Covenant of Mayors could be a useful framework to develop their commitment further. When asked about their potential interest for the Covenant of Mayors, the survey indicates that local authorities are interested in it whenever the benefits are "tangible". Only 33 % of the local authorities would be interested in being involved in the Covenant of Mayors if its purpose is to highlight and disseminate their mitigation and/or adaptation strategies (it is one purpose of the Covenant of Mayors). 67 % of the respondents would be interested in being involved in the Covenant of Mayors if the Covenant of Mayors endorses and supports the efforts deployed by local authorities in the implementation of sustainable energy policies (it is another purpose of the Covenant of Mayors). If we consider that international networking and exchange of information are the main benefits of the Covenant of Mayors mentioned by key actors interviewed, it is clear that such factors are not enough to engage the majority of municipalities.

According to the interviews, practical and technical factors could also be affecting a participation in the Covenant of Mayors. In smaller municipalities, practical issues such as an access to information in English and the need to elaborate documentation in English could be reducing an involvement in the Covenant of Mayors. As well, the lack of technicians specifically in charge of climate change policies makes it more difficult to prepare the Sustainable Energy Action Plan and monitoring reports (in many municipalities environmental department technicians manage different issues and tasks). The burden of Reporting has also been identified as a key factor, since municipalities have to report about change related actions to different authorities. The reporting process related to the Covenant of Mayors partially overlap other reports, each one with different forms and deadlines, ending up in duplicating the efforts.

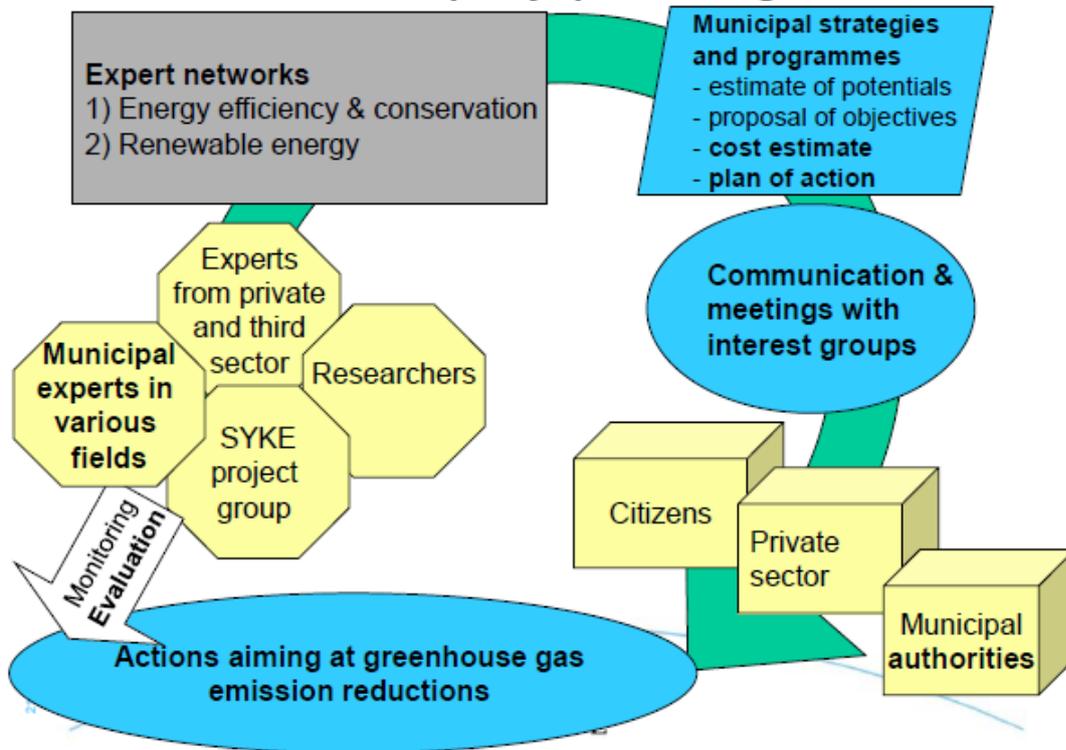
It is worth mentioning that six municipalities of the region (Hanko, Inkoo, Lohja, Porvoo, Raaspori, Siuntio) are members of the Hinku project, i.e. “the carbon neutral municipalities”. It confirms the engagement of the Helsinki-Uusimaa local authorities in local climate policies. The Hinku project proposes an interesting approach to climate change mitigation and it is coordinated by the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE, a national environmental research centre under the Ministry of the Environment).

The Hinku municipalities have the objective to reduce GHG emissions in their area by 80% by 2030 compared to the GHG emissions for 2007. Its objective is more ambitious than the minimum goal required by the Covenant of Mayors (20% by 2020). The Hinku process is similar to the Covenant of Mayors: a baseline of emissions is carried out by the SYKE; actions are defined and implemented to save energy and improve energy efficiency, particularly in homes, public offices, companies and transportation, as well as measures to promote the production and use of renewable energy (SYKE, 2013, 2); GHG emissions are monitored by the SYKE. The Covenant of Mayors and the Hinku project differ from each other in the following main aspects:

- Participation: in the Hinku project, the participation of private sectors and citizens seems to be stressed both in the identification of the mitigation actions, as well as in the implementation (SYKE, 2013). Participation is also internal, since interdisciplinary working groups are compulsory, including the participation of all administrative sectors of the municipality. In the Covenant of Mayors, the participation is highlighted as a key factor in the process of identification and implementation of SEAPs but no specific procedures are defined to guarantee it.
- Type of support to municipalities: The Covenant of Mayors central executive bodies provide guidelines and technical support for the preparation and implementation of Sustainable Energy Action Plans. Furthermore, the Covenant of Mayors manages a power tool of communication and dissemination; the Covenant of Mayors webpage and database with available information of all signatories. The Covenant of Mayors promotes a participation in international forums. On the other side, the coordinating actor of the Hinku project; SYKE, provides technical advisory, GHG monitoring, and communication support (managing program webpage). Also, the program provides economical support to the Hinku municipalities. The Hinku project seems able to provide a closer support than the Covenant of Mayors does.
- International networking and dissemination: The Hinku documents have broad references to dissemination at an international level, but actual measures are not so relevant. The Covenant of Mayors offers its power online platform and the network of signatory local authorities that promotes large dissemination and many tools for exchange of information and coordination. Furthermore, although the Covenant of Mayors does not offer direct financial support, the promotion of the Covenant of Mayors is a priority of many European Union funded programs, for instance of the European Territorial Cooperation programs. Therefore the Covenant of Mayors signatories can find further opportunities of collaboration and a “priority channel” to get funds from the mentioned programs.

The Hinku project and the Covenant of Mayors could seem to be “competitors” in gaining the interest of local authorities engaged in the climate change mitigation but, according to the information collected in interviews and data, small municipalities are more likely to join the Hinku project, while bigger municipalities prefer the Covenant of Mayors. Therefore, the Hinku project and the Covenant of Mayors have “well differentiated markets”. The Hinku project is more accessible and engaging for smaller municipalities, due to the proximity of the Hinku coordinators, language etc. The Covenant of Mayors is more attractive for bigger municipalities, those that pay more attention to international networking as such, and the exchange of information (main benefits of the Covenant of Mayors). A further analysis is offered in the last chapter in order to outline the synergy and complementarities between both initiatives.

Carbon neutral municipality: process figure



both the technical support and participation in the Hinku process.

Source: SYKE, 2013, 3.

Illustration of

4.2 Involvement quality of Helsinki-Uusimaa local authorities in Covenant of Mayors

In order to assess the quality of the involvement of the local authorities in the Covenant of Mayors, the Sustainable Energy Action Plans of each signatory has been analysed according to the criteria described in "Methodology" chapter. The same criteria was used in the analysis of Sustainable Energy Action Plans of Valencia region municipalities, making possible a comparative analysis (please see following chapter).

In the Helsinki-Uusimaa region, most of the signatories (two of the three signatories) have reached the 3rd step of the Covenant of Mayors, it means they signed the Covenant, they submitted the Sustainable Energy Action Plans and they also submitted a monitoring report. It reveals a sustained commitment with the Covenant of Mayors. This aspect is worth to be highlighted because in the Covenant of Mayors there are cases in which municipalities have signed the Covenant and have submitted the Sustainable Energy Action Plan but then their commitment decreased or changed due to political changes in the local government or for the evolution of the local context. Availability of monitoring reports allows an access to information about the implementation and efficacy of the plans and not only about the forecast purposes and actions.

One of the three signatories of the region, the municipality of Helsinki, has been benchmarked by the Covenant of Mayors for the excellence way of putting some practices in place. Three actions of Helsinki Sustainable Energy Action Plans have been benchmarked: a demand-based ventilation in 15 buildings; the Viikki environment house; the replacing of 50,000 street lights. It is interesting to do a reference to the benchmarking overall in Finland, where 10 actions from 3 municipalities (Oulu, Tampere and Helsinki) were benchmarked. Both in the Helsinki-Uusimaa region and in all of Finland, 30 % of signatories have been benchmarked, which is a clear indicator of the quality of the Sustainable Energy Action Plans.

In the Annex 1, detailed information is provided about the analysis of the Sustainable Energy Action Plans of the municipalities of the Helsinki-Uusimaa region. Hereafter some general conclusions that were reached are outlined. Sustainable Energy Action Plans obtained total high scores and they stand out positively with the following criteria: citizen's participation and multi-actor's actions. The participation of citizens seems to be a main feature of the Sustainable Energy Action Plans analysed. Since there is little available information about a participation in the elaboration of the plans, high score obtained refers mainly to the engagement of citizens in the implementation of the Plans. For example, in Vantaa the Plan foresees training and a raising awareness to tenants and constructors about energy efficiency. It is an example of how to engage citizens in the climate change mitigation. In the same direction, some actions of the plans need the involvement of other public or private actors. For example, in Vantaa an application of Ecompass will be promoted by offering the possibility of training in companies and, in Helsinki, legislative or tax-incentive-related methods of guidance of private actors will be used to improve energy efficiency.

Such actions have a common feature that makes the dissemination potential easier, once most of them are not much expensive nor present hard technical challenges to be replicated. In this regard, Helsinki-Uusimaa region proposes interesting experiences to the Covenant of Mayors with potential to be disseminated.

Among the most interesting practices (beyond the actions benchmarked by the Covenant of Mayors, already mentioned above), the following actions can be listed:

- Advice on energy efficiency; Integration of land use planning and traffic planning for the tightening of the city structure. To improve efficiency in private buildings through: financial support; legislative or tax-incentive-related methods of guidance; and the supply of advice and services.
- Training and raising awareness to promote Ecompass (in business and communities); Energy conservation agreement foreseen by procurement; training and raising awareness to tenants and constructors about energy efficiency (old and new buildings); studies to tie price of plots sold or rented by the city to energy efficiency; applying the land use and building act in a way that energy efficiency is promoted.
- To promote new buildings inside or close to former building (land use planning tools) in order to avoid urban sprawl; climate information to citizens (info point about energy/climate change); energy efficiency agreement.

It is remarkable that the plans in the Helsinki-Uusimaa region have not obtained relevant scores in criteria related to no-carbon benefits or mainstreaming, such as social sustainability and gender mainstreaming. The purpose of the Sustainable Energy Action Plans and the Covenant of Mayors is not related to such issues. Nevertheless, local actors should take advantage of climate change mitigation plans and energy plans to integrate no-carbon benefits because win-win solutions or wide impact actions raise social acceptance and citizen's engagement.

5 **COMPARITIVE ANALYSIS**

A comparison between the performance of the Covenant of Mayors in the Valencia region and in the Helsinki-Uusimaa region points out a major **difference in terms of number of signatories and percentage over the total number of municipalities**. The causes of the low number and percentage of signatories have already been set out in previous chapters. Despite the huge difference in the number of signatories, the gap is significantly reduced if we focus the analysis on the number of inhabitants of the signatory municipalities over the total population of each region. Approximately 60 % of the population of the Helsinki-Uusimaa region live in the signatory municipalities. In the Valencia region, signatory municipalities represent 63% of the total population of the region, since most of signatories are small municipalities. According to this data, the **proportional population "coverage" of the Covenant of Mayors in Valencia region and in the Helsinki-Uusimaa region is quite similar**.

Considering the quality of the Sustainable Energy Action Plans, the average score obtained by the plans of the municipalities in the Valencia region is "6" and in the Helsinki-Uusimaa region it is "21", because all municipalities in the Helsinki-Uusimaa region have activities considered as potential best practices, whereas approximately 30 of them have such in the Valencia region. A larger number of signatories and prevalence of small municipalities (with less technical skills and resources) could be biasing negatively the score of the Valencia region Sustainable Energy Action Plans but even so the difference is still huge. Furthermore, when only the step reached in the Covenant of Majors (signature, SEAP submission, monitoring reports submission) is analysed, most of the Helsinki-Uusimaa municipalities are in the step 3 (monitoring reports submitted) whereas Valencia region municipalities step 2 (SEAP submitted) is the most common step reached by signatories. **It points out that the real commitment of municipalities in Valencia and Helsinki Uusimaa can be different: in Valencia, available grants from some provincial authority (among other causes) could have promoted a "less genuine" involvement in the Covenant of Mayors. On the other side, in Helsinki-Uusimaa few municipalities joined the Covenant of Mayors but with a real and sustained commitment**, according to a political priority (climate change) largely assumed by local authorities.

Some interesting trends can be drawn up if we analyse the typologies of best practices identified in the Sustainable Energy Action Plans of both regions.

Some typologies of actions are common in both regions. For instance, advising services for citizens, commerce or even for the different departments of the own municipality about energy efficiency are common in both regions. Municipal tax abatements or calculation systems based on energy efficiency, especially for real estate taxes, are strategies used in both regions to drive private owners to improve efficiency on their buildings. Some difference in most common practices can also be noticed. These practices have a high potential to be exchanged and transferred from Helsinki-Uusimaa to Valencia and vice versa. Since best practices transferring is a recommendation, this part will be developed in the last chapter.

6 **CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE IN COVENANT OF MAYORS**

6.1 In Valencia region

As local grants for Sustainable Energy Action Plans of Covenant of Mayors signatories have been suspended due to financial and economic crisis, the path of new signatories and SEAP submissions has slowed significantly in the last years. For regions like Spain and other countries affected by public budgetary restrictions, an involvement in the Covenant of Mayors should be a reoriented, prioritizing dissemination of win-win, with low costs, and should consist of high impact actions, using public-private partnership (PPP) in order to overcome budget problems, both for mitigation, as for adaptation. As referred above, some innovative and interesting practices can be found at a local level but **the Covenant of Mayors gives a great opportunity for information, know-how and technology exchange at European level**, implementing the goals of Covenant of Mayors such as building a network for best practices dissemination and improving quick access to existing expertise. It could enhance the quality of SEAPs in Valencia region.

In order to achieve this purpose, the following problems should be addressed:

- 1- Most of the SEAPS are not monitored and there is no information about their effectiveness and level of actual implementation.
- 2- Most of the win-win, PPP based, low cost, and high impact actions, both for mitigation and adaptation, are not highlighted and disseminated at European level. For many local authorities, an involvement in the Covenant of Mayors seems not to be affordable because SEAPS or adaptations plans are expensive to be elaborated and implemented. Best low cost practices dissemination would encourage new local authorities to be involved in the Covenant of Mayors, increasing the number of signatories and improving their actual commitment.
- 3- Innovation is not encouraged, causing a big number of repetitive and standardized SEAPS.

The strategy of intervention should deal with the problems detected above, focusing on innovation, best practices dissemination, adaptation-mitigation linking/integration and a potential linkage with other European Union climate policies.

- 1- Information about the Covenant of Mayors will be disseminated in order to make local authorities and the civil society aware of the opportunities of these initiatives. Raising the awareness of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) about the Covenant of Mayors should be a priority in order to promote the citizen's participation, as well as the CSO lobbying on local authorities to commit them to the Covenant of Mayors.
- 2- In order to improve the quality of the commitment with the Covenant of Mayors, a network should be created for the showcase and exchange of win-win, and of PPP based, low cost, and high impact actions. The best practices of mitigation will be useful to improve the quality of the SEAPs.
- 3- Activities: Supporting local authorities in their involvement in the Covenant of Mayors, in order to improve the quality of the performance of the local authorities, once they have signed the Covenant of Mayors. Technical assistance should be provided, as well as training the local authorities in monitoring Sustainable Energy Action Plans, and in implementing them.

6.2 In Helsinki-Uusimaa region

Dissemination of the Covenant of Mayors

The low rate of municipal adhesion to the Covenant of Mayors, together with the results of the survey, suggest that Helsinki-Uusimaa needs further work in the **communication and dissemination in relation to the Covenant of Mayors**. The Finnish supporting partners of the Covenant of Mayors (the association of Finnish municipalities and regions, and the Union of Baltic cities) carry the main responsibility in this task and they may be supported by other local actors, as we suggest below. **A dissemination should aim at local authorities, but also at citizens and civil society organizations**, in order to improve their participation in the SEAPS, as well as their role of monitoring local public policies in the climate change mitigation.

Making the Covenant of Mayors more engaging: European Union funding opportunities and the role of the supporting actors.

Pure communication is not enough since, accordingly to the survey, the municipalities do not perceive clearly the usefulness of the Covenant of Mayors. Actually, the Covenant of Mayors potential to promote networking

and collaboration in all Europe does not seem to be enough to engage most of the Helsinki-Uusimaa municipalities. The municipalities of the Helsinki-Uusimaa region are more interested in receiving technical or other kind of support but the Covenant of Mayors may be failing in providing such support, because closeness and proximity are not the main features of the Covenant of Mayors executive bodies. The result is that many interesting local experiences and many engaged municipalities are not highlighting their practices, and a huge potential for learning is being lost. Some strategies to change the trend can be suggested. Firstly, **the benefits of being a part of an European network such as the Covenant of Mayors should be highlighted**. The members of the Covenant of Mayors do not just have more opportunities to get in contact with other municipalities to exchange information and participate in joint actions, but they also have **more opportunities in accessing the European Union funded programs to prepare, implement and improve the Sustainable Energy Action Plans**. For instance, The Covenant of Mayors related proposals are prioritized in an Interreg program. The project “Covenant of Mayors in the Central Baltic Capitals”, funded by the Central Baltic Interreg is an example of it. Secondly, the technical assistance by the Covenant of Mayors should be more tangible and concrete, it should “be brought closer” to the municipalities. The supporting partners of the Covenant of Mayors should have an important role in this process. They should be more active actors and work jointly and coordinately to support any technical advisory in preparing, implementing and monitoring the Sustainable Energy Action Plans. **The Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council could require the status of “a supporting partner” of the Covenant of Mayors, and coordinate the action of the other supporting partners** that operate in the region (the association of Finnish municipalities and regions and the Union of Baltic cities). Since the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council already has a substantial experience according to its mandatory competences in land use planning and also in energy advisement, it could provide some technical support in these issues for the Sustainable Energy Action Plans of each municipality. As these issues are core competencies of the regional council, the cost would not be so much higher and the technical support could also be covered by the European Union funded programs that prioritize support to projects related to the Covenant of Mayors.

Hinku and Covenant of Mayors synergies

The Hinku initiative was briefly described in the previous chapters. As mentioned before, mainly smaller municipalities have committed to the Hinku project. The Covenant of Mayors does not seem to be too engaging. Municipalities that already are implementing their mitigation plans within the framework of Hinku will not have many difficulties to join the Covenant of Mayors and to accomplish its requirements. Hinku could promote the integration of its municipalities in the Covenant of Mayors. The benefits for the municipalities have been already highlighted and **it is worth mentioning that one of the strengths of the Hinku project is the focus on participation**. It could contribute to the improvement of the Covenant of Mayors, including a critical feature to achieve success in SEAPs that Hinku could apply systematically. **Hinku could require the status of a supporting actor of the Covenant of Mayors and therefore acquire an easier access to the European Union funds**. The main effort to make it easier for the Hinku municipalities to join the Covenant of Mayors should be done in terms of reporting, since it has been mentioned as an obstacle for smaller municipalities. **The integration of the Hinku project and the Covenant of Mayors into the reporting process integration (forms, methodology, deadlines, etc.) should be promoted to make it easier for municipalities to join both initiatives at the same time**. Due to the quality of the municipality commitment to the Hinku project and the interesting features of this initiative such as the focus on participation, many best practices could be provided to the Covenant of Mayors network by these participating municipalities. Otherwise, these practices will not be internationally highlighted and learning potential will be lost.

6.3 Joint actions

Most interesting actions to be transferred

Like the introduction in the chapter “Comparative analysis”, some interesting trends can be drawn up if we analyse the typologies of best practices identified in the Sustainable Energy Action Plans of both regions. Some typologies of actions are common in both regions (please look at the chapter “comparative analysis” but some differences in most common practices can also be noticed.

In the Helsinki-Uusimaa region local authorities pay more attention than the authorities in Valencia do to actions related to land use planning. For instance, some of the signatories included the integration of land use planning and traffic planning for tightening the city structure in its Sustainable Energy Action Plans. In this respect, municipalities in Finland have to frame their own land use plans in the mandatory regional plans provided by the regional council (Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council, in the case of that region). Some SEAPs in the Helsinki-Uusimaa region also include the promotion or inclusion of energy efficiency agreements in procurement criteria. Energy efficiency agreements are based on former “Energy conservation agreements” and they are a voluntary scheme to improve continuing improvement in energy efficiency, complementing (or alternative) for regulation and taxes. Businesses and municipalities, as well as housing properties can sign an energy efficiency agreement with the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. The signatory commits to improve its energy efficiency, and can be granted by the Ministry to carry out an energy audit and to invest in improving the efficiency. In addition to an access to subsidies, other benefits for the signatory are: more energy efficiency and less energy costs, the promotion of a positive image, the proof of energy efficiency for environmental permits or procurement with “green rules”, etc.

In Valencia, actions to promote car sharing and bike sharing, as well as carpooling are common in the SEAPs. Public Private Partnership for street lighting facilities refurbishment was carried out by one municipality in the Valencia region (Alzira) and was benchmarked by the covenant of mayors. According to the partnership, a private company installed a new and more efficient public lightening, making the initial investment with its own resources, and the municipality paid a % of the savings, previously agreed upon to the company.

To identify such practices, the dissemination potential was considered and only the practices that resulted easier to be transferred have been mentioned. Therefore, all these practices have a high potential to be disseminated and applied in other contexts. Obviously a case by case analysis should be carried out to evaluate the feasibility of each practice in a specific municipality but, a priori, none of them present features that preclude or hinder replication. **A transfer of such practices between the Valencia region and the Helsinki-Uusimaa region is highly relevant, since they tackle some of the main sources of GHG.**

To pilot new trends

Since both regions already have a consolidated experience of actions engaging the private sector, innovative private-public cooperation or market based practices could be experimented. The adaptation of “Social impact bonds” is a new trend in order to mobilize debt capital markets to implement climate change solutions (“climate bonds”).

They are a family of outcomes-based contracts in which private investors pay for interventions needed to achieve agreed results in advance, and work with delivery organizations to ensure that the results are achieved; donors and/or governments make payments to investors if the interventions succeed, with returns linked to progress achieved. If the interventions fail, investors lose some or all of their investment. (Center for global development, 2013, 1).

It is a win-win solution: the government pay less than it would have paid if the actions were implemented directly; an implementing partner gets funds to execute the action; investors have an opportunity of investment with attractive returns (it is still a risk investment).

Enhancing the Covenant of Mayors and making it more engaging

The Valencia and Helsinki-Uusimaa regions have a common interest in enhance some feature of the Covenant of Mayors. Covenant of Mayors seems to have weaknesses in providing technical advisory for signatories. Actually, a low rate and number of signatories in Helsinki-Uusimaa, as well as the overall low quality of the SEAPs in the Valencia region, have this in common. The Helsinki-Uusimaa municipalities are not much interested in the Covenant of Mayors, because it does not provide enough support and the Valencia municipalities could not elaborate a high quality SEAP for the same reason; they did not receive much support. **To improve this aspect, both regions could promote lobbying in the Covenant of Mayors executive bodies.** Probably, it is not feasible that the Covenant of Mayors provides some technical assistance from its headquarters to all countries, but a **decentralization process of technical assistance could be promoted, for instance at a regional level.** A stronger collaboration of the Covenant of Mayors with regional authorities

or associations of municipalities could make it possible to provide specific technical advisory to municipalities, as it has already been suggested to the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council. Regional authorities or associations of municipalities could provide it if the Covenant of Mayors recognizes the role of the supporting actors (already existing) more clearly and with concrete measures (financing or other benefits).

New trends: Mayors adapting

Although the Covenant of Mayors was created by the European Commission (EC) in order to promote the mitigation of climate change (Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions at local level), **urban adaptation has been introduced by the European Commission as a new priority for the Covenant of Mayors in 2014. The initiative of the Covenant of Mayors for adaptation is named “Mayors Adapt” (MA).** The MA process is quite similar to the mitigation commitment of the Covenant of Mayors and it can be consulted in the web page of the MA (<http://mayors-adapt.eu/>).

The Valencia region, as well as the Helsinki-Uusimaa region faces important adaptation challenges, due to the effects of the climate change in the region (both actual and future effects according to the most likely scenarios of the climate change).

In spite of all this, **the involvement of the Valencia and Helsinki Uusimaa local authorities in the MA is definitely not significant**, as only the Valencia municipality has joined the initiative. In 2014 the MA has been launched less, which partially explains the limited support yet obtained. **The joint initiatives of the dissemination of the MA could be carried out by both regions.** As a climate change adaptation is a recent approach for many municipalities, the **focus should be on the exchange of information and practices**, since municipalities could be very interested in learning by experience of others to enhance adaptation plans required by the MA. Once again, **the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council has a lot of knowledge and know how that can contribute to high quality municipal adaptation plans, since the land use planning is crucial in the climate change adaptation. Therefore, the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council should consider being a supporting partner for Mayors Adapt, as well.**

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All the Sustainable Energy Action Plans of the Valencia and Helsinki Uusimaa region have been studied.

8 GLOSSARY

CoM: Covenant of Mayors

EC: European Commission

EIT: European Institute of Innovation and Technology

EU: European Union

GHG: Greenhouse Gases

KIC: Knowledge and Innovation communities

LA: Local Authorities

LULUCF: Land-use, land-use change and forestry

MA: Mayors Adapt

NGO: Not governmental organization

PiP: Pioneers into Practice

PPP: Public-private partnership

SEAP: Sustainable Energy Action Plan

SYKE: Finnish Environment Institute

9 ANNEXES

Annex 1: detailed analysis of best practices in SEAPs

Annex 2: questionnaire submitted to no signatory local authorities

Annex 3: Basic facts of Valencia Region

Annex 4: Basic facts of Helsinki-Uusimaa region