

Press release

For immediate release

ICLEI European Convention 2011 brings cities together to enhance sustainability

Freiburg, Germany, 1 March 2011 - As resources decline and the planet is increasingly subjected to the effects of climate change, it is clear that the goal of cohesive European sustainability is more vital than ever before. It is imperative that changes are made to the way we consume scarce resources and that our societies are organised smartly, with sustainability at the forefront of our planning. The ICLEI European Convention 2011, which takes place from 12-14 September in Brussels, Belgium, will act as a forum to discuss the implementation of Europe-wide sustainability measures in cities.

Janez Potocnik, European Commissioner for the Environment, has been confirmed as a key note speaker for the opening plenary. The commissioner will address attendees on the advancement of European local sustainability in the context of the EU2020 strategy looking beyond GDP for a resource and an energy efficient Europe. The conference promises to be a thought-provoking experience, aimed at ICLEI members, representatives of the business community, and local government decision makers. The title, "Cities in Europe 2020 - Enhance sustainability now!" captures the urgency with which the issue must be approached. The primary question of the conference is, should Europe change its focus from „growth“ to enhancing sustainability, or are these concepts compatible? The conference will also examine how to pursue the appropriate balance between growth and sustainability to deliver low carbon, climate resilient and sustainable cities by 2020.

This unmissable event will give participants the opportunity to network with representatives from the European Commission, European Parliament, Committee of the Regions and many more institutions based in Brussels. They will have the unique chance to unite with other local governments and discover more profound sustainable action to overcome today's crises. There will also be the opportunity to explore the Hamburg European Green Capital 2011 "Train of Ideas", an interactive exhibition promoting innovative green ideas on its stop-over in Brussels.

The conference will be deeply rooted in the city of Brussels: workshop sessions will take place in various ICLEI member offices in the city, allowing participants to gain a first-hand experience of the local context throughout the conference. The prestigious Centre for Fine Arts (BOZAR) has been confirmed as the venue for several plenaries. On-site study visits in Brussels Capital Region will also be available for participants, providing a chance to explore the practical side of conference themes through innovative neighbourhoods, nature sites, and more.

ICLEI members will be both participants and co-partners in the conference. The European Convention 2011 aims to break the structure of the traditional conference, and will provide participants with opportunities to discuss key topics in small workshop groups spread out in various locations in Brussels. Registration for the conference is now open. Interested parties can secure their place by filling out the online registration form.

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Background:

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability is an international association of local governments and national and regional local government organisations. ICLEI currently has 1,100 members worldwide and 200 in Europe. Founded in 1990, ICLEI provides technical consulting, training, and information services to build capacity, share knowledge, and support local government in the implementation of sustainable development at the local level.

The Convention is supported by the Brussels Capital Region, the Metropolitan Council of Dunkerque and Hamburg European Green Capital 2011 and in cooperation with ICLEI member representation offices in Brussels.

Europe 2020 is the EU's growth strategy, made up of three pillars – smart growth, sustainable growth and inclusive growth. The EU has set five ambitious targets based on these pillars, relating to employment, innovation, education, social/inclusion and climate/energy, all to be reached by the year 2020.

More information:

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