

A large crowd of people, seen from behind, has their hands raised in a gesture of celebration or agreement. They are gathered in front of a modern building with large glass windows. The scene is bright and sunny, with greenery visible through the windows. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

**35 YEARS**  
**OF EMPOWERING**  
**LOCAL COMMUNITIES**  
**IN DECIDING**  
**THEIR FUTURE**

Impact Report 1990-2025



ENERGYCITIES



Mohamed Ridouani

# FOREWORD

## WORKING TOGETHER FOR A MORE RESILIENT, JUST AND DEMOCRATIC EUROPE

In 2050, our cities will be decarbonised, resilient, and liveable for everyone. They will host vibrant economies that regenerate resources rather than exhaust them, provide affordable and secure energy to all, and empower communities to shape their own environments.

This is not a distant utopia. It is a vision we, as local leaders, actively support, because it is at once an answer, a commitment, and a safeguard.

### **An answer to rising challenges**

Today, cities stand at the intersection of multiple crises: social fragmentation and polarisation, rising energy and living costs, growing uncertainty, and escalating climate risks. These challenges are structural in nature and demand structural responses. Moving toward a resource-based system is one such response, one that directly shapes urban well-being while improving climate outcomes.

### **A commitment to citizens and communities to give them the leading role**

Building Europe from the bottom-up means acknowledging a simple truth: we, as local leaders, cannot act alone. Civil servants, citizens, associations, and communities are all essential to shaping the places we share. Each of these actors is a leader in their own right. Together, they translate democratic values into action, not abstraction.

They must be empowered to design local policies, transform sectors, and reshape economies from the ground up, creating enabling frameworks for alternative economic models that raise living standards for everyone.

### **A safeguard for a strong democracy**

Over the past decades, and with increasing intensity in recent years, democracy has come under pressure. Yet one level remains vibrant, practical, and effective: the local level. Cities are where democracy is lived every day. This is where participation, inclusion, fairness, and progress take concrete form.

Safeguarding democracy means ensuring that cities and communities retain the political space, capacities, and tools to make choices about their future, even in times of crisis, uncertainty, and polarisation.

We, as local leaders, are already working toward this vision, toward this future, toward what we can call the European Dream. To get there, we need inspiration, real-world examples, room to test and learn, and the collective strength of cities moving in the same direction. We need spaces where we can exchange openly, challenge one another constructively, and articulate bold ambitions. Energy Cities is that hub: a trusted, safe space where cities meet, learn, and act together.

As President of Energy Cities, I am honoured to support this association in standing alongside cities, guiding them, equipping them with the tools and resources they need to deliver their chosen strategies, helping them understand complex systems so they can make informed decisions for themselves, and amplifying their demands at EU and national level. Energy Cities is an association rooted in strong human values that I am proud to represent.

The future of Europe is a collective endeavour, one that Energy Cities has supported and strengthened for 35 years. This future we are striving for is already unfolding. Our task now is clear: to keep the momentum alive, and to keep on building this next Europe, together.

**Mohamed Ridouani**, Mayor of Leuven (BE) and President of Energy Cities



# INTRODUCTION

In 2025, we celebrated 35 years of action. This anniversary is an opportunity to look back not only at the evolution of our network and members, but also at how we have navigated, influenced and sometimes anticipated the political context shaping Europe's energy transition.

Energy Cities was founded in the early 1990s, at a time when energy was not yet a European priority and climate change barely featured on political agendas. In our birth country, France, energy policy was steered entirely at national level, with little concern for emissions reduction, and no meaningful role for local authorities.

From the outset, Energy Cities was built on a visionary conviction: we will only succeed in building a better, low-carbon future if local authorities are empowered to decide their own energy future, democratically and in the public interest.

From this certainty, our mission was born: **to shape EU and national policies for a decentralised, democratic and decarbonised energy system.**



Over the past 35 years, climate and energy have moved from the margins to the centre of European policymaking. Accompanying these political shifts, we have played an active role in consistently rooting these policies in local contexts across Europe and beyond.

We have done this while strengthening local capacity to steer the transition and connecting a vast network of pioneering cities and towns, to form a strong community of on-the-ground changemakers leading the way.

Here is a look back at the past three and a half decades, and how Energy Cities, our members and our partners have helped shape the world we are in today and the tomorrow we aspire to build together.

# THE 1990S

## CLIMATE CHANGE IS FIRST PUT ON THE AGENDA

1999 — 1990

Climate change emerged as an international concern in the 1990s, with the creation of the **UNFCCC** in 1992 and the adoption of **the Kyoto Protocol** in 1997.

At the time, the EU's role in energy policy remained limited and largely focused on market integration rather than decarbonisation, while early national support schemes for renewables began to appear.



ANNUAL forum  
1997

## We pioneered our vision of decentralised and democratic energy



The two oil crises of the 1970s prompted European countries to reconsider how they managed energy consumption in the decades that followed. In the 1990s, climate change rose up the political agenda, and a number of pioneering towns had already gained experience in energy management. Our association was present at the first windows of opportunity for municipalities to shape the transition, providing a platform for these cities to connect with one another and share their experience with others. In 1997, while Barcelona held the presidency of Energy Cities, the city developed its first solar ordinance, a precursor to measures that later became mandatory across Spain.

### Annual Forum

**In 1997, we organised our first annual forum in Strasbourg (FR), focusing on energy efficiency.** This inaugural edition brought together more than one hundred participants from across our network. Since then, except for the two years disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, we have organised an annual forum providing a dedicated space for members to meet, exchange experiences, and draw inspiration, supporting them in strengthening and accelerating their local transition actions.

“ I’m attending the forum this year because I want to hear about other people’s experiences and projects and also share my experiences ”

*Ivana Dubravec | Energy Efficiency | Environmental protection and spatial planning advisor | City of Križevci (HR) during the 2025 Annual forum.*

# THE EARLY 2000S

## AN ENERGY POLICY FRAMEWORK IS SET UP AND THE EU IS ENLARGED

2000

Building on rising awareness, the early 2000s saw energy policy take clearer shape at EU level. Energy transition became a core policy area, with the launch of the **Emissions Trading System in 2005**, the first **renewable energy directive** and the introduction of energy efficiency into EU legislation. These developments triggered stronger national action, including **France's Grenelle laws**, which established binding energy targets and detailed implementation mechanisms.

2010

### We contributed to making local planning the cornerstone of the energy transition

As Europe entered the 21st century, from the momentum of the Kyoto Protocol to the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, we played a critical role in ensuring that local governments held the pen on climate and energy planning.



We helped **establish local planning as an obligation**, positioning it as a **strategic tool to structure a city's services, design and long-term vision**.

This approach took shape most visibly **through the EU Covenant of Mayors**, founded in 2008 and steered by Energy Cities from the outset, alongside five partner networks. The Covenant gave Europe's climate ambition a local face and rapid momentum, with hundreds of cities committing in its early years to meet or exceed the EU's 2020 "20-20-20" targets.

### Raising awareness about building performances

Launched in 2003, the DISPLAY project anticipated and supported the Energy Performance of Buildings directive (EPBD) by providing a tool for municipalities to measure energy and water consumption of their buildings together with their CO2 emissions. In addition to the calculation tool, Energy Cities created the award "Toward Class A" that was given to municipalities that ran the best communication campaign to raise awareness on the building performances for its users.





The Covenant's early success sent a clear signal: local governments were often ahead of national counterparts on climate ambition, aligned with – or going beyond – EU objectives, and ready to be recognised as key partners of the transition. The Covenant also established a robust planning framework through **Sustainable Energy Action Plans (SEAPs)**, later evolving into **Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs)**, as climate and energy policy became increasingly integrated, and climate adaptation was incorporated alongside mitigation. Energy poverty soon became a third pillar, making the Covenant methodology a reference for cross-sectoral planning in pursuit of a just transition.

### The IMAGINE seminars



The IMAGINE seminars  
2011

The IMAGINE seminars were designed to support local territories in rethinking their future by fostering awareness and responsibility around energy consumption and impacts. Between 2006 and 2011, the seminars were held annually, bringing together diverse actors from civil society to brainstorm and explore visions of low-carbon cities with a high quality of life. These seminars led to the development of toolkits featuring innovative participatory and co-creation methods, as well as a range of online resources.



As the EU welcomed new Member States in 2004 and 2007, Energy Cities was deeply involved in creating regional energy agencies to increase expertise. With the support of the European Union, we also launched national “Energy Cities-minded networks” in six new Member States to foster local authorities’ capacities, boost learnings and share good practice on local energy transitions.

### Clermont-Ferrand

In 2003, following a study visit we organised in Freiburg im Breisgau (DE) for the energy management agency of Clermont-Ferrand (FR), a turning point was reached for the French city: the municipal council approved concrete measures for a local sustainable energy policy, including the establishment of an Energy Commission and a new municipal budget line dedicated to a technological innovation fund for renewable energy.

FR



### Eastern European countries

Since the early 2000s, we supported non-EU countries in developing energy efficiency strategies. Together with the European Commission, we organised a periodic information exchanges among municipal associations and other potential partners in Europe, known as the BISE Forum (“Intelligent Energy Forum of European Municipalities”). The forum aimed to promote the concept of a European Emergency Plan to rapidly improve energy efficiency in Eastern European countries. Since 2011, we have steered the Covenant of Mayors Office for Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus, further deepening our support in the region.

# THE 2010S

## CLIMATE AND ENERGY POLICY INTEGRATION

**2010** During the 2010s, the need to better integrate climate and energy policy became evident. Binding targets were introduced through **the EU's 2020 "20-20-20" package**, firmly positioning energy as a central lever of decarbonisation. **The Lisbon Treaty** strengthened the EU's competence in energy policy, and in 2014 the EU adopted a **2030 climate and energy framework** with more ambitious emission reduction, renewable energy and efficiency targets.

**2015**



As the EU climate and energy framework took shape, local governments were translating overarching targets into concrete action. The Covenant model was adopted in several countries – including **Belgium, Italy and Spain** – as a structuring axis for regional and national climate action, while others drew inspiration to develop their own planning processes.

In France, for example, **the 2015 Energy Transition Law** made local climate and energy planning mandatory through **PCAETs**, largely inspired by SECAPs.

With the European Green Deal, local planning was firmly recognised as a key driver of decarbonisation. Thanks to sustained advocacy by Energy Cities and its allies, major Green Deal legislation incorporated a strong local dimension. A notable example is **the Energy Efficiency Directive**, which introduced a legal **obligation for local heating and cooling plans** – acknowledging that decarbonising heat is fundamentally a local challenge, and that cities must be equipped with the capacity and resources to lead it.



### The Green Deal

The essential role of local governments is recognised in European Green Deal legislation. To help cities navigate this legislative framework, with Eurocities, we developed a guide outlining the new opportunities and obligations for local governments under the Green Deal, while raising awareness of the key role they should play.

# 2015- 2020

## A LONG-TERM VISION IS SET

2015

The signing of the **Paris Agreement** in 2015 marked a major turning point in international climate policy, with the EU playing a key role. This momentum was reinforced in 2018 by the **EU Governance Regulation**, which aligned climate and energy planning through National Energy and Climate Plans, and by growing public mobilisation, notably from the **Fridays for Future** movement.

Climate and energy policy increasingly became a structuring force across EU action, paving the way for the climate neutrality target for 2050 and the **European Green Deal**, the culmination of years of growing ambition and policymaking. The Green Deal dominated the European policy agenda during the last Commission mandate and pushed forward much progress, even as political instability – from Brexit to the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement – exposed the fragility of consensus.

2020



### Besançon

FR



Besançon, a member since 1995, has implemented an inspiring heating strategy by re-purposing a district heating network established in the 1960s. Today, this network, largely powered by renewable energy sources and waste heat recovery, forms the backbone of Besançon's ambitious decarbonisation strategy, combining environmental responsibility with economic resilience and social inclusion.

## We helped local governments reorganise around the transition

As local energy and climate planning took root, it also began to reshape the internal organisation of local governments. Embedding planning at the local level helped structure municipal action more strategically, giving rise to a new generation of urban policymaking and strengthening cities' ability to self-organise.

Complementing the Covenant of Mayors, the European Energy Award (EEA) offers an additional framework for structuring local energy and climate policy. Energy Cities introduced this approach in France through the Cit'ergie certification, first awarded to eight French and Swiss local authorities in the Rêve-Jura-Léman region.



### Heating & Cooling

The EU Energy Efficiency Directive required Member States to ensure that municipalities with more than 45,000 inhabitants prepare local heating and cooling plans. This created a significant opportunity to accelerate the decarbonisation of the heating and cooling sector, while strengthening local governments' knowledge, resources, and implementation capacity. To support cities in this process, we developed an online tracker that mapped the state of play of heating and cooling planning across EU Member States and showcased case studies from front-running cities.

We are also a member of the Cool Heating coalition, and together with other NGOs and think tanks, we continue to work towards decarbonised, renewable and affordable heating and cooling (H&C) for all in the EU by 2040. We have a strong focus on protecting vulnerable households by ensuring the H&C transition is affordable.

Expanding the EU's understanding of the energy transition to include a strong local and community dimension has been a long-standing priority for Energy Cities. Within the Community Power Coalition, we have advocated for **the recognition of energy communities as a key driver of a fair, democratic and socially inclusive transition**. This work contributed to **the inclusion of energy communities in the Renewable Energy Directive II**.

Today, municipalities participating in ADEME's TETE programme (Territoire Engagé pour la Transition Ecologique) receive structured support to plan and implement their energy and climate transition. Their progress is assessed on a scale from one to five stars, reflecting both the level of commitment and the effectiveness of their action plans. Municipalities achieving the highest rating are eligible to apply for the Cit'ergie Gold Label. To date, eleven French members of Energy Cities hold this distinction, highlighting its value in aligning municipal services around shared strategic and climate objectives.

As climate ambition increased and **a long-term 2050 climate-neutrality vision emerged**, it became clear that municipalities could not carry the transition alone. The need to break down silos, embed climate and energy considerations across all municipal departments, and mobilise stakeholders and citizens became a central outcome of the planning process.

### Online training

In 2023, we developed our first on-line learning modules on energy communities, to help municipalities support community energy in their territories. This "Espresso Training" marked the first course in a now comprehensive and varied on-line learning offer for municipalities. All courses are available free of charge through the Local Transition Learning Centre, an online platform we developed to strengthen the skills and expertise of local actors.



### Strasbourg

Strasbourg, a member since 1996, exemplifies a successful partnership between the municipality and local energy communities. In the development of its 2050 energy strategy, the city actively involved the local energy community, establishing a local information point to support citizens in navigating legal and administrative procedures. In parallel, Strasbourg works closely with the energy community by making municipal rooftops available and by supporting them throughout their collective self-consumption projects.



As governance models evolved and the integration of climate and energy policies pushed cities to move beyond silos, Energy Cities supported its members in adopting more **engaging and participatory approaches**.

## Energy forums

In the mid 2000s, we coordinated the BELIEF project to promote local energy transition planning and stakeholder engagement by networking towns and cities across Europe. BELIEF focused on creating local energy forums where municipal authorities, citizens, local stakeholders, energy experts and organisations could come together to exchange experience, co-create strategies and support local action on energy efficiency and renewables.

The project's output included a practical guide published in 2008 based on the experience of 20 towns and cities in 11 European countries that had set up local energy forums. The guide presented principles, methods, examples and testimonies for effective engagement.



DE



### Heidelberg

Heidelberg (DE) has developed a strong local climate and energy strategy since the early 1990s, underpinned by visible municipal leadership and sustained public engagement on the energy transition. A member since 1996, and a participant in the BELIEF project, the city adopted a participatory approach to update its Climate Protection Concept. Key stakeholders were systematically involved through multiple channels, ensuring that the revised strategy responded to the concrete needs and day-to-day challenges of local climate action. These inclusive and engaging campaigns successfully raised awareness of climate protection, energy efficiency, and locally produced renewable energy solutions.

“ We have a long tradition in organising forums and round tables and BELIEF offered us the opportunity of starting a comprehensive PR campaign for climate protection in partnership with all the stakeholders from the energy and climate sector. ”

*Prof. Dr. Eckart Würzner | Lord Mayor of Heidelberg*



Through projects such as TOMORROW, inspired by the **Leuven2030 model**, we helped municipalities co-create bottom-up **2050 roadmaps**, establish cross-cutting **transition teams** and engage citizens and stakeholders. We also worked to spread practical knowledge and tools for citizen participation, including the design and facilitation of local climate assemblies. We advocated for local capacity to run these intensive but highly effective participatory processes, highlighting success stories from our members. This contributed to the inclusion of local citizen assemblies in the **new Agora funding** programme of the next EU budget, designed to strengthen democracy.

## 2050 Energy transition roadmap

The TOMORROW project brought together our members Braşov (RO), Brest (FR), Valencia (SP), Codema (EI), Mouscron (BE), and Niš (SE) to support the development of their 2050 energy transition roadmaps. The project introduced innovative governance approaches based on transition management, enabling participatory processes of visioning, learning, and experimentation to accelerate sustainable transitions. As a result, cities have been empowered to fully play their role as enablers of the local energy transition.

## Tangible targets

Beyond planning, it has become imperative for local governments to effectively communicate their actions to get everyone on board and involved. Inspired by the Flemish Climate Pact, we promoted a way of translating complex climate plans into tangible targets that citizens could easily identify and engage with.



IE



Codema, Dublin's Energy Agency, has been our member since 1998 and is at the forefront of the city's transition to a low-carbon future. They established a dedicated transition team that explored innovative and participatory approaches to shaping Dublin's fossil-free future.

Dublin

“We created a transition team which is defined as a group of frontrunners, motivated people from a wide range of sectors. We recruited 18 people to join the team and their first exercise was to do this visioning exercise to envision Dublin in 2050.”

Katie Harrington | Executive Manager-Public and Stakeholder Engagement at Codema Energy Cities' podcast | March 2022.



BE



Brussels-Capital Region

The Brussels-Capital Region (BE), our member since 1998, organises annual citizens' assemblies. Each year, 65 to 100 participants are selected from a pool of 10,000 randomly invited residents, ensuring a diverse and representative group. The assembly is renewed annually, maintaining a long-term, ongoing engagement process. The Brussels-Capital government has committed to responding to the assembly's proposals and to developing a roadmap for integrating these long-term recommendations into the region's climate governance.





## We have worked to equip local governments with the instruments and finance needed for their transitions

As Energy Cities helped establish obligations for local energy and climate planning across Europe, we have consistently **advocated for the instruments and resources municipalities need to plan and implement their transitions.**

Since 1998, and throughout the 2000s, Energy Cities played a key role in setting up **local energy agencies alongside our members.** Supported by the European Commission's **SAVE programme** – a precursor to LIFE – Energy Cities helped set up hundreds of local energy agencies to provide essential technical and strategic support for municipal energy transitions.



With the emergence of Green Deal policies and expanding local obligations, Energy Cities helped shape **EU support mechanisms** to enable municipalities to fulfil their responsibilities. Since 2019, the European City Facility (EUCF), a long-standing advocacy priority, continuously addresses a critical policy and EU funding gap – the lack of support and guidance for cities to turn their climate strategies into concrete, bankable projects.

The first EUCF cohort of 330 cities has planned a combined investment of 31 billion euros to advance their climate plans. This success has inspired the creation of the newly launched **European Energy Communities Facility (EECF)**, using a similar cascade-funding model to support local energy communities. Energy Cities is now advocating for a **Heat Facility**, modelled on the same concept, to help cities develop investment plans for local heat decarbonisation, including district heating infrastructure, new heat sources, building renovation, and municipal staff to guide implementation.

### AdEporto

AdEPorto, the regional energy agency of the Metropolitan Area of Porto (PT), was established in 2007 with the support from the **Intelligent Energy Europe** Programme, the successor of the **SAVE** Programme. AdEPorto joined our network in 2011 and continues to act as a leading organisation in addressing energy issues in the municipal domain, contributing to the transition to more efficient and sustainable energy systems.

PT



# 2020–2025

## ONE CRISIS AFTER ANOTHER PUTS EUROPE UNDER STRAIN

2025  
2020

Since 2020, successive crises have reshaped European priorities. The Covid-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine prompted unprecedented EU responses, from recovery funds to the REPowerEU plan. While this period saw the achievement of the EU Green Deal and important legislation accelerating the pace of the transition, competing pressures set the stage for political shifts. By the 2024 European elections, growing polarisation and geopolitical tensions had shifted the focus away from the Green Deal towards security, competitiveness and affordability, with "simplification" emerging as the new guiding principle for EU governance and funding.



### We continue to empower local governments in steering a resource-wise future

As the new decade rolled around, the succession of crises that seized Europe – from Covid19 to growing climate disasters and war on Europe's doorstep – has made it increasingly clear that an energy and climate lens alone is not enough to deliver truly secure and liveable places. Increased pressure on local resources, combined with growing economic and security concerns, has made local resource regeneration a priority.

In response, Energy Cities has expanded its approach, grounding the transition more firmly in the responsible use of local resources and respect for planetary boundaries. We set a vision for a [transformative decade](#) anchored in local and democratic decision-making over our resource systems.

In 2022, we launched **our five thematic Hubs** to explore interconnected resource systems – from energy and food to land – and to identify the innovative governance and alternative economic models needed to address them.

Recent crises have shown that local governments, through years of working on the transition, have built a strong foundation for both present and future action. Those that have reorganised internally – establishing transition teams and cross-cutting structures – are better equipped to mobilise across sectors, build alliances and respond to emerging threats. At the same time, a resource-wise approach to the transition has proven to be an increasingly important strength in navigating the challenges of this decade.



## Utrecht



Utrecht, our member since 1998, is home to 370,000 inhabitants and is projected to grow by 20% over the next two decades. With limited land available for new developments and fewer social housing options than in previous years, the city is tackling the housing crisis through innovative, practical solutions. Its approach combines the principles of sufficiency and well-being to create sustainable, liveable communities.

The 2022 energy crisis provided a clear example. Municipalities were prepared to act when Russian threats strained Europe's energy system, swiftly implementing local energy-saving measures already embedded in their climate strategies. **The Covenant of Mayors' Cities Energy Saving Sprint** showcased their role as key allies to the EU's REPowerEU plan and demonstrated the effectiveness of sufficiency measures.

As a longstanding advocate for resource sufficiency, Energy Cities has co-founded the Sufficiency Alliance to integrate this approach into EU policymaking. As a result, we have recently seen progressive movement in the right direction, with the principle reflected in the Guidelines for the **New European Bauhaus** accompanying the **EU's first Affordable Housing and the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive**.



## Sufficiency: the missing pillar for a resource-wise future

Cities have been key stakeholders in climate change mitigation and environmental protection, exploring more ambitious solutions such as sufficiency policies.

We scouted **interesting, concrete examples of sufficiency policies and actions** implemented by different European cities and presented them in a guide to inspire other cities.



Grenoble

Grenoble (FR), a member since 1997, has developed a sufficiency strategy that initially focused on energy, particularly street lighting, and has since been extended across a wide range of sectors, including mobility and heating. These measures are now embedded in the city's structural sufficiency policies.





## We have stepped up our efforts to match the scaling needs of implementation

After nearly three decades of shaping policies and strengthening local climate and energy planning, the 2020s have also marked the start of an **implementation decade**. As the European Green Deal reached maturity and climate impacts intensified, the acceleration of the transition brought a growing and urgent need for resources – financial, human and technical – at the local level.

Drawing on 35 years of close, day-to-day collaboration with municipalities, Energy Cities has developed a deep understanding of cities' **learning needs, capacity gaps and transformative potential**.

As demand for support increased, the time came to take our learning offer a step further. We turned our accumulated experience in capacity-building – rooted in peer-to-peer exchanges, study visits, training sessions, workshops, webinars and more recently e-learning – into the **Local Transitions Learning Centre (LTLC)**. This open access, engaging learning environment is designed to respond to the real needs of our members and partners, enhancing their skills, knowledge and inspiration.

To date, the LTLC offers more than **25 courses**, available in multiple EU languages, covering core transition topics such as transition management, energy communities, financial planning, data management, citizen engagement and urban regeneration. Since 2024, over **1,500 participants** have enrolled to strengthen their skills, access practical tools, and exchange lessons learned and success stories from across Europe.

Beyond digital learning, Energy Cities is proud to be nurturing an **international learning community** that connects online and in-person exchange, involves citizens alongside local administrations, and supports the application of knowledge in everyday practice – helping cities turn ambition into action, making their transitions tangible, inclusive and future-proof.

## SPARKLE

**SPARKLE – Sustainable Planning and Resilience Knowledge Learning Environment (2024–2028)** is a LIFE LOCAL project coordinated by Energy Cities. SPARKLE is strengthening the capacities of more than 600 local and regional authorities through a comprehensive learning and support programme. Delivered via three e-learning courses in seven languages, five in-person schools, mentoring, and peer-to-peer exchange, SPARKLE enables cities to translate knowledge into action, designing and implementing effective, green, and just transition strategies.



### Aradippou



In 2016, municipal officials from Aradippou (CY) visited Samsø (DE), the first island to achieve 100% renewable energy. Aradippou had joined our network two years earlier and was already developing smart grid solutions for its industrial areas based on renewables. Inspired by Samsø's achievement, the municipality pursued an ambitious path and, just under ten years later, became fully energy independent, with all its electricity supplied by renewable sources.

“Throughout these years the Energy Cities team, with the leadership of Claire Roumet and the ex-President Prof. Dr. Eckart Würzner, has been an invaluable resource of scientific knowledge, political support and encouragement. This, and the collective strength of our fellow –members, put us on the right path to make it happen. Thank you, Energy Cities!”

Dr. Panayiotis Michael | Aradippou's Academic Advisor for Energy Transition and Smart Cities.





# 2025 2030

## WHAT COMES NEXT?

After three and a half decades of progress, Energy Cities stands at a critical juncture. Decade-long victories, culminating in the European Green Deal, have put the energy transition in the spotlight, but the space for action seems to be now narrowing.

Economic and political constraints are squeezing local capacity. The EU – a key ally since the early 2000s – appears to be withdrawing support for cities and regions, centralising decision-making in the name of crisis agility and simplification, as seen with **the proposed long-term EU budget for 2028-2034**.

Meanwhile, energy remains at the heart of EU agenda, carrying high geopolitical and economic stakes. The direction of energy policy will define whether Europe manages to reassert its independence and security in a shifting and increasingly volatile world order, defend democratic values, and ensure fair access to energy as a means of repairing Europe's fragmenting social fabric.

These challenges can be met through the integrated, resource-wise, whole-of-society approach that Energy Cities and its members have been advancing. Building on 35 years of experience, Energy Cities will continue to work in this direction, convinced that it is the key to Europe's long-term independence and resilience.



As 2025 closes and we step into an uncertain era, our focus is clear – we must redouble efforts to:

- 1 Increase locally produced, homegrown energy** as the foundation for Europe's decarbonisation, security, and independence;
- 2 Redefine public funding rules and governance at EU and national levels** to channel critical investment and resources into local transitions;
- 3 Foster municipal innovation** to strengthen local democratic resilience and enhance cities' capacity to face recurring crises.



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