

# EVENT REPORT

## A New Era for the European Renovation Wave: Sharing Perspectives

**Date:** March 20, 2024

**Location:** The Thon Hotel EU, Brussels, Belgium

**Organisers:** Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, Covenant of Mayors Europe, C40 Cities and Renovate Europe

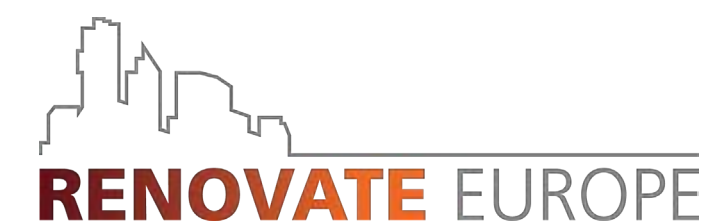
**Attendees:** Around 75



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Through initiatives such as the [Cities Energy Saving Sprint](#), launched by the Covenant of Mayors-Europe, the European Committee of the Regions and the European Commission and the [C40 Energy Crisis Emergency Plan](#), European mayors have highlighted the cities’ role in delivering and harnessing the benefits of fossil fuel-free and energy efficient buildings as part of the just transition. They also called for action to maximise the potential of deep renovations, which can improve energy efficiency and security, lower energy bills, increase renewables uptake, create green jobs and improve residents’ quality of life.

Ahead of the European elections, this event brought together mayors, deputy mayors, business associations, EU policy makers and key stakeholders to take stock of the progress so far and discuss challenges and opportunities for the future regarding building renovations, following also the update of the European climate and energy legislation.

This event was a great opportunity to build the momentum for the key role of cities in implementing EU and national policies. Furthermore, it provided the space for Brussels based stakeholders to have a forward looking discussion with an embedded local perspective on how to deliver building renovations on the ground. It also brought cities and business stakeholders together to exchange on their experiences regarding the importance of cooperation and partnerships.

### Welcoming remarks

Benjamin Jance, Head of Research and Innovation at Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM) welcomed everyone and outlined the objectives of the event.

### Keynote remarks

Brian Motherway, Head of the Office of Energy Efficiency and Inclusive Transitions at the International Energy Agency set the scene strategically for the panel discussions through his keynote remarks

### Panel discussions

Two panel discussions took place. You can find the agenda of the event with the speakers per panel [here](#).

#### Panel 1 - What comes next for building renovations in Europe and the role of the cities

This high-level panel discussion took stock of progress so far, the new rules deriving from the updated European policy framework at national and local level as well as existing challenges for mobilising private financing for energy efficiency projects at the national and local level. It was emphasised that cities and local authorities have a close connection to their residents and a key role to play in building trust. This is very important for scaling up renovations and the deployment of renewable energy, ensuring that the benefits are delivered to people, as the energy transition will not be successful without their support. For that, it is important to have a holistic approach which does not only look at energy related issues. Implementation is a challenge but the updated EU policy framework offers opportunities for multilevel dialogues and the involvement of local authorities. Finally, stability of the policy framework, a proper

identification of investment needs as well as continuing exploring different ways for easier access to financing for the cities, developing new business models and striking a balance between public and private financing are some of the key points that were highlighted during the discussion on financing.

#### Panel 2 - Enhancing cooperation between cities and stakeholders to boost local action on buildings

This high-level panel discussion addressed issues such as how to enhance cooperation to accelerate local efforts to renovate and decarbonise their building stock, supporting the most vulnerable in the process. Cities and local authorities were repeatedly praised for their innovation and pioneering building decarbonization and respective projects, but it was also underscored that there is a gap in the support that would help cities scale up this work to the level needed to meet national and EU targets. Stability, predictability, identifying local needs were some of the elements noted as important to help develop better business models. Furthermore, continuing to share best practices, partnerships and involvement of all relevant stakeholders were highlighted as vital to co-create effective policies/programmes/projects and boost cooperation.

### Concluding remarks

Adrian Joyce, Campaign Director of Renovate Europe wrapped up the event by providing a comprehensive summary of the discussions.



## EVENT

### **A New Era for the European Renovation Wave: Sharing Perspectives**

**SAVE  
THE DATE**

**Wednesday  
20<sup>th</sup> March 2024  
14.00 - 18.00**

**Brussels, Belgium.**



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We cannot achieve success in the green transition without the support of our communities. Restructuring the energy sector alone is insufficient; we must also address education, healthcare, and other sectors. The transition must occur within our minds and society alike. This begins by engaging and involving the people, with the help of the mayors.

**Peter Dermol,**  
**Mayor of Velenje, Slovenia**



The biggest challenge is implementation - this is where cities have a crucial role. Local authorities and cities are important - they are the closest to the citizens and best-placed to get citizens interested and involved. That's where one-stop shops are. I have benefitted from advice from the local one-stop shop in my own renovation and know from that experience how helpful such advice is. It is also at the local level where the benefits of building renovation are felt most. For example, better insulated homes are more resilient to heatwaves, which are an increasing problem in cities.

**Nina Neumann, Team leader,**  
**Legislative Development and Enforcement,**  
**DG ENER, European Commission**



We have a great job to do, for which I have three keywords. Participation: keeping people involved because revolutions don't come from above. We need partnership: private companies and public administration work together in a profitable and sustainable way. And finally, we need trust to engage in long-term transformation.

**Andrea Tobia Zevi,**  
**Deputy Mayor of Rome for Heritage & Housing**



Cities are key facilitators and frontrunners in the solar transition: with around 80% of the EU population living in urban areas, cities and local authorities are the perfect candidates to supply their citizens with secure, affordable, and sustainable energy. They should be supported in their effort at national and European levels.

**Walburga Hemetsberger,**  
**CEO, Solar Power Europe**



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If we want to increase the renovation rate, we need systems to support collective renovation. Renovation of homes is a multi-level challenge that needs to be faced by a strong local coalition of stakeholders. Cities play a crucial role in this coalition but often lack the capacity.

**Britt Berghs,**  
project coordinator 'Linkeroever (Left Bank)'  
Climate Neutral 2030 for the city of Antwerp

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Energy efficiency renovations and renewables are a powerful combination. Their twin combination is paramount to deliver an effective renovation wave. There is no time to lose. With the new EPBD, all hands should be on deck for the implementation. As an industry, we stand ready, walk the talk and partner with cities and citizens for energy efficient buildings.

**David Ducarme,**  
COO & Deputy CEO, Knauf Insulation

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Despite the COVID crisis and war in Ukraine, and while renovation activities in the residential sector are stalling in many EU countries, public, cooperative and social housing providers across Europe - which represent around 11% of the total housing stock - have managed to maintain their leading role in the fair energy transition. But they are now facing strong headwinds at the moment where local stakeholders need to implement the EU green deal.

**Julien Dijol,**  
Director of Policy, Housing Europe

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We heard today that good practices exist already, good projects are already on sight and being completed, and there is a good understanding of the complexities.

**Adrian Joyce,**  
Renovate Europe's Campaign Director



