



TEN LEADING BASQUE TOWNS SIGN UP TO COVENANT OF MAYORS

SIGNATORIES PREPARE ROADMAP FOR COMING YEARS

Since the European Commission tasked EVE with attracting Basque municipalities to the Covenant of Mayors in 2009, ten towns have joined the energy saving initiative. They are now preparing an action plan for the coming years, aimed at cutting their energy consumption by over 20% and meeting 20% of energy demand with renewable energy sources.

The European Commission wants to involve as many European towns and cities in the project as possible. In the Basque Country, it is being pioneered by the three provincial capitals, Bilbao, Donostia-San Sebastian and Vitoria-Gasteiz and another seven towns – Areatza, Irún, Oñati, Amezketa, Abanto-Zierbena, Balmaseda and Basauri – together accounting for 42% of the region's population.

The Covenant, which is voluntary, commits the towns to some highly demanding objectives, going beyond the already ambitious "20-20-20" targets, under which EU member states agreed to cut CO2 emissions by at least 20% in 2020. In this case, the undertaking comes from local government. Through intensive energy saving and the use of renewables in all areas (except industry), they will contribute to meeting the national target by focusing on what are known as "diffuse" sectors, which have a high rate of energy consumption.

Their first task is to set out the specific line of action they plan to develop over coming years, in a "sustainable energy action plan". This plan has to be approved by the commission, and will lay the foundations for all the town's actions to reduce energy consumption, introduce renewable energy sources and cut carbon emissions by at least 20%. All the Basque signatories are now working on this ambitious plan; at the head is Vitoria-Gasteiz, whose action plan has already been approved by the European Commission. For these and other energy-related actions, the city has been named "European Green Capital 2012".

The objectives of the Covenant of Mayors in the Basque Country for 2011 involve continued active collaboration with signatory municipalities to help them develop their plans and the specific actions they are setting up, as well as to continue attracting municipalities willing to take on the great challenge and the considerable effort required by this energy saving commitment.

Further information:

www.eve.es/covenant/cas