



## **PRESS RELEASE**

Vienna, 27 February 2020

### **City planners, political leaders and researchers gather in Vienna for #DecarbCities 2020 Conference**

City planners, innovators and political leaders highly involved in energy planning and decarbonization of urban areas gathered for the 2020 Decarb Cities Conference at the MuseumsQuartier in Vienna on 25 February 2020. Various representatives from many countries presented their projects at the conference, showcasing latest solutions and innovations to an audience of specialized decision-makers focused on finding unique solutions for the successful transition into a carbon free energy future.



*Bernd Vogl opening the conference and World table session  
c) City of Vienna / J. Wiedl*

Supported through the networks of EHPA, Wärmepumpe Austria, Energy Cities and the Covenant of Mayors, Decarb Cities provided a platform for inspiration and exchange between cities across Europe to reveal new innovations, solutions, ideas, and emerging technologies for zero emission heat supply, circular energy economy and fossil-free neighborhoods. Helsinki presented their 2035 roadmap towards a climate neutral city, showcasing their heat strategy, a role model for other cities. The debates focused on the role of the various levels of government in aligning their policies and legislation in order to speed up the transition. The European Commission shared its views on the future energy market and how the EU is planning to support 100 cities to become climate neutral by 2030 through a dedicated “mission innovation”; a new approach to test technical and governance models to transform urban areas.

The City of Vienna hosted the conference to share their innovative approach of climate protection areas in which new buildings will no longer utilize fossil oil and gas, but rather rely on environmentally friendly energy sources. The initiative was launched in four districts – and will expand to the rest of the city step by step.



*Policy debate on DecarbHeat: What does it mean in reality in cities?*

*Stephan Brandligt, Vice President of Energy Cities and Vice-Mayor of Delft, in the Netherlands presented the Dutch Heat Strategy and how the national government included the cities in designing it, "I am happy to share the Dutch accord; the most ambitious agreement between different levels of government from the local to the national; but also between the different sectors: heat being one of the most urgent to decarbonize. Our approach is unique as it breaks down the Paris agreement requirements of reaching climate neutrality in 2050, for each region and for each economic sector. Thus, it is clear what the objectives for anyone of us are. This*

*requires a very strong political will, and an honest sharing of responsibility; but it is the only way".*

*Thomas Nowak, General Secretary of the EHPA, added, "Continuing the success of the previous years, the 2020 edition of Decarb Cities proves once more that it is totally possible to achieve carbon free cities and regions in Europe by 2050 and the objectives of the European Green Deal, with a variety of mature technologies already available today! Now, we need policy-makers at all levels to shape the markets that will effectively deliver carbon neutrality by 2050 and the related benefits for citizens and businesses."*



*Thomas Nowak, European Heat Pump Association*

*Richard Freimüller, president of Wärmepumpe Austria, said, "We are at a pivotal moment for the ecosystem. It is of vital importance for Europe's cities and regions to take the right path into a decarbonized future and phase out coal, oil and gas as source for energy. The conference has shown that heat pumps are a core technology of this transition and will become the main solution for residential heating within the next years."*

*Peter Kraus, Local Council, Spokesperson for Energy and Planning in Vienna is pleased to have had the chance to open the conference on behalf of Birgit Hebein, the Vice Mayor of the City of Vienna. "We are already seeing rapid innovation in terms of technology. Now, we are pushing to improve the policy framework to accelerate the decarbonization of the energy system in Vienna and throughout Europe.", added Peter Kraus.*

### **About the organizers:**

The Decarb Cities is organized by:

#### **European Heat Pump Association (EHPA AISBL)**

EHPA promotes awareness and deployment of heat pump technology in Europe. All activities aim at creating a market environment that facilitates a faster deployment of heat pump

technology to unleash its benefits on a European level: efficient heating and cooling using renewable energy. EHPA also coordinates the Heat Pump Keymark – a European certification scheme for all heat pumps, combination heat pumps and hot water heater. For more information, please visit: [www.ehpa.org](http://www.ehpa.org).

### **Wärmepumpe Austria**

Representing the Austrian heat pump industry, over 250 companies organize their interests in the association Wärmepumpe Austria. We see ourselves as an inter-company and non-partisan representation of interests along the entire value-added chain. Our members include all well-known manufacturers and distributors of heat pumps, electricity supply companies as well as suppliers and drilling companies. Our installation partners are the link to the customer, promoting renewable environmental heat and standing for quality and efficiency. We are an active member of the European Heat Pump Association and represent the Austrian interests in Europe. For more information, please visit [www.waermepumpe-austria.at](http://www.waermepumpe-austria.at)

### **Energy Cities**

Energy Cities is a network of 1,000 local governments in 30 countries. We believe that the energy transition is about more than renewable energy or great technologies: It is about a wise use of resources while strengthening local participation and well-being in a democratic Europe.

Energy Cities wants a radical transformation of the energy systems and policies, giving citizens the power to shape a decentralized and renewable energy future. We trigger a trustful dialogue between citizens, local leaders and EU & national institutions to accelerate the energy transition in Europe.

### **EU Covenant of Mayors**

The EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy brings together thousands of local governments voluntarily committed to implementing EU climate and energy objectives. The Covenant of Mayors was launched in 2008 in Europe with the ambition to gather local governments voluntarily committed to achieving and exceeding the EU climate and energy targets. Not only did the initiative introduce a first-of-its-kind bottom-up approach to energy and climate action, but its success quickly went beyond expectations. The initiative now gathers 9,000+ local and regional authorities across 57 countries drawing on the strengths of a worldwide multi-stakeholder movement and the technical and methodological support offered by dedicated offices.

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