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Towards sustainable energy future – EMPOWERING final conference

The Final Conference of EMPOWERING:

TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FUTURE AND EMPOWERING LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

was held on 25. June 2019 in the Castle of Diósgyőr, in Miskolc, Hungary.

The Final Conference underlined the importance of effective energy and climate policies and plans to achieve the EU 2030 target, and highlighted the possible solutions, options and tools to better and effectively support the energy and climate planning process and implementation at local and regional level.

After the opening speeches by Mr. János Kovács, Mr. Péter Pfiégler and Ms. Barbara di Pietro the first session was dedicated to **global supporting structures**.

It was started with a li-

ve-streamed presentation of Mr. Martin Eibl (EASME, Brussels). He highlighted the **crucial role of local authorities** and the need for excellent projects at local level. He presented the EU support to local energy leadership, as well as the currently available funding under the EU Research and Innovation Framework Programme H2020. There are currently 16 topics open under the Energy Efficiency Call 2019. Mr. Csaba Lajtman (Hungarian Climate Alliance) spoke about the importance and benefits of the Covenant of Mayors’ initiative and Mrs. Dely Krisztina (Energy Cities) emphasized that cities have the what it takes to act, but municipalities must be empowered to do so.

During the second session **successful initiatives** were presented strengthening local and regional authorities

to meet the EU climate and energy targets. Best practices from EURAC given by Jessica Balest on improving building energy efficiency, the use of renewables, and a cloud-based computing platform for decision-making and energy management. Mr. Ádám Harmat (WMF Hungary) introduced the PANEL 2050 with the aim of creating durable and replicable sustainable energy networks at local level. As the result the CEESEN platform and network was created that enables to present project ideas and find cooperation opportunities with 2600 members. Mr. Gergely Mikó (LENERG ENERGY Agency) talked about how the local, regional and national level can best cooperate together experienced in the frame of C-Track50.

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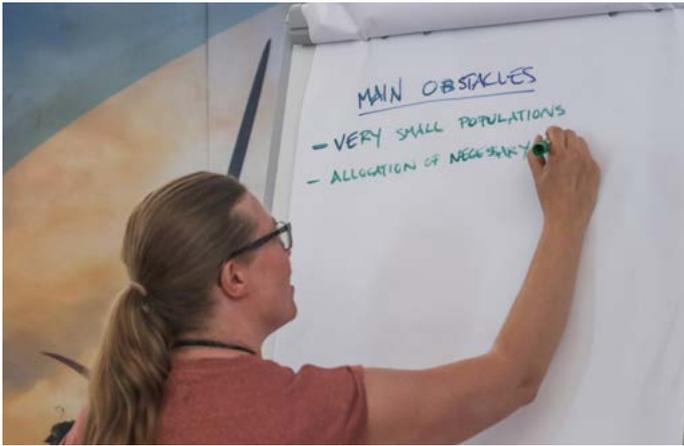
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Wall of ideas 2050



The last session of the Final Conference was dedicated for **exchanging experiences and ideas on how to meet 2030 objectives.**

The final panel discussion was aimed to bring the key points and perspectives together. Anna Sager and Kerstin Rubenson (RISE, Sweden) moderated the interactive session and together

with the Local Energy Board (LEB) members, the 2030 target and the **main obstacles** to reach them were discussed and identified as follows:

- Data availability, regular updating and maintenance
- Lack of political support
- Limited resources (human, financial)

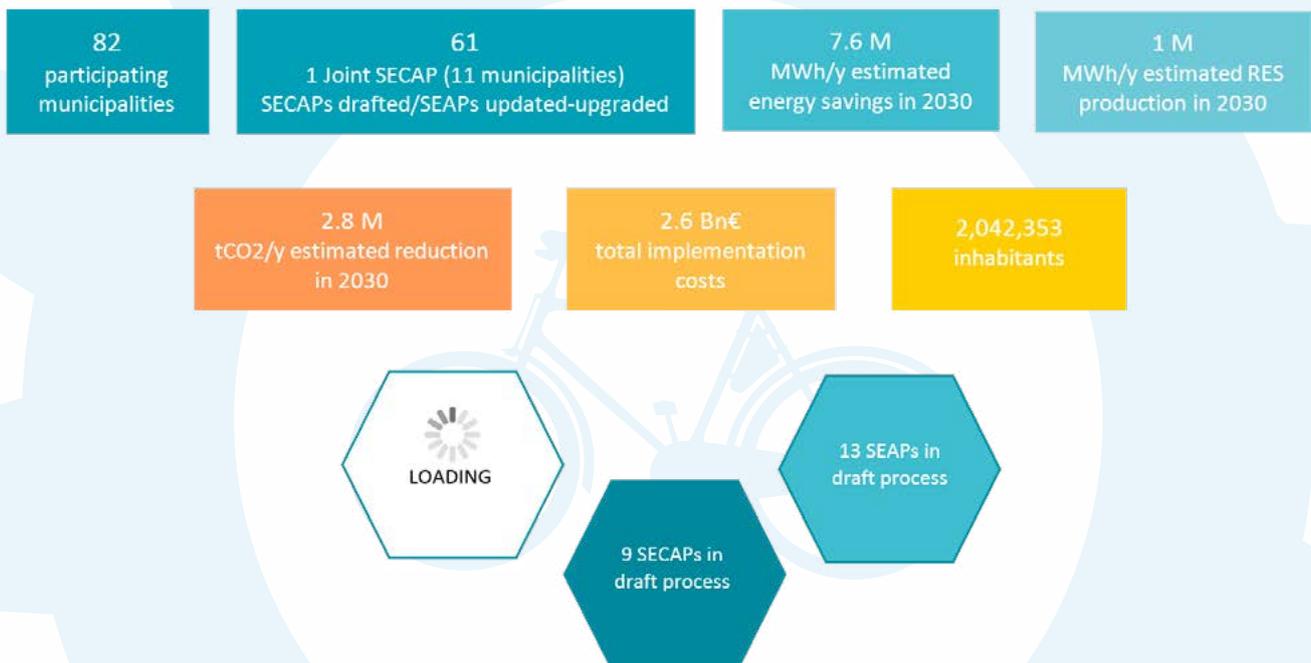
The **success factors** for Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans SECAPs, were also highlighted. Sharing of good examples and practices as well as face to face exchange experience were identified as one of the major facilitators for successful action plans. Additionally having access and training on the EMPOWERING project's

supporting tools and constant capacity building programmes are both essential elements during the energy plan preparation.

The participating municipalities also pointed out involvement and commitment of decision makers, politicians and citizens as a key factor of success.



Main outcomes of EMPOWERING project



What they say about EMPOWERING



"I've thinking about EM-POWERING project, about Brussels EUSEW and Final Conference in Miskolc. EMPOWERING has been a chance for many municipalities not only to have the SECAPS fulfilled but also to have a group of technicians trained. Thanks to this project, we gained more responsibility, visibility and a more important role in taking decisions at our Council. The financial resources remain the main hurdle to implement long term policies, but EMPOWERING

was not the project to solve them, its objective was to establish the way we must follow in a future, to view future obstacles and to enhance our long term strategies" - José Ángel Gutiérrez Aguilar, from Environment department of Morón de la Frontera (Spain) city council.

These words coming from a local authority summarise EM-POWERING path in six regions in EU, started 3 years ago, its approach, obstacles encountered and its main achievements.

EMPOWERING, in the framework of the Covenant of Mayors, aimed through a multilevel governance and targeted capacity-building programme of local authorities, to reach the 2030 objectives. The most important prerequisite was to support communities in their efforts towards sustainable development by investigating their needs and priorities, overcoming barriers, directly involving them in transnational exchange programme and in peer to peer capacity building initiatives.

EMPOWERING was the occasion to show that if we join forces learning from each other we could deliver a sustainable future that leaves no country, region, city or village behind.

Our planet requires **everyone progress**. We need all cities and regions to **embrace new sustainable plans, cooperate across borders and support citizens** not just implementing decisions but **being the protagonist, towards 2050**.



Empowering's participation on EUSEW2019 in Brussels

Full room for “Local authorities as drivers to address climate change” session, at the 14th edition of Sustainable European Energy week EUSEW, organised by the European Commission in Brussels, were **EMPOWERING experience** was presented together with H2020 projects CoME EASY, C-Track50, IMPLEMENT, PentaHelix, LIFE SEC ADAPT and the Covenant of Mayors Office. ‘Shaping Europe’s Energy Future’ is the 2019 EUSEW momentum, this session aimed to reaffirm, among the over 90 policy sessions, with 4,000 registered participants (public authorities, private companies, NGOs and consumers), 380 speakers and 100+ unique networking



opportunities, the **strategic role of local authorities**, in the energy reduction and the

fight against climate change at local level, considering it part of a comprehensive integrated

development policy for a sustainable future which involves also their citizens.

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