**EU ADVANCES SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN**

**EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES**

***October 20, 2016, Yerevan (Armenia) – The new EU initiatives and instruments to foster sustainable urban development and boost local economic growth in the Eastern Partnership countries will be in focus of 2-day High-level International Conference “Fostering sustainable development in Eastern Partnership countries” to be held on October 26-27, 2016 in Armenia Marriott Hotel Yerevan (1,*** [***Amiryan St., Yerevan 0010, Armenia***](http://www.marriott.com/hotels/maps/travel/tbsmc-tbilisi-marriott-hotel/)***).***

For the first time representatives of central, regional and local authorities of the Eastern Partnership countries will gather in Armenian capital Yerevan to discuss the most crucial issues of empowering regional authorities and citizens, administrative reform and decentralization as an effective instrument for sustainable local development, as well as encouraging participative approach to local economic development in the EaP region.

The High-level Conference is jointly organised by the European Commission, Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development of the Republic of Armenia, CORLEAP and Covenant of Mayors East (CoM East).

Welcome addresses will be delivered by Mr. Davit Lokyan, Minister of Territorial Administration and Development of the Republic of Armenia; Mr. Piotr Antoni Świtalski, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Head of European Union Delegation to Armenia; and Mr. Taron Margaryan, Mayor of Yerevan. The keynote speaker Mr. Lawrence Meredith, Director for Neighbourhood East, Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) of the European Commission, will present the European Neighborhood Policy review and support mechanisms to local economic development in the Eastern Partnership countries.

On this occasion, the European Commission will launch the second phase of Covenant of Mayors in the Eastern Partnership countries (CoM East) and the new Mayors for Economic Growth initiative (M4EG), targeting energy efficiency and the business sector respectively. These actions aim at fostering cooperation between local authorities and civil society organisations with regards to enhanced accountability, exchange of good practice and efficient and effective administrative capacities for achieving and implementing local development policies. In addition, they are closely interconnected as making economies less energy intensive will also make them more competitive, leading to local job creation and sustainable development.

The first day of the conference will be culminated with the solemn Signing Ceremony where nearly 30 Mayors of new signatory cities will join the Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy.

The next day will be dedicated to the prospects and benefits of the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy in the Eastern Partnership countries. Participants will also review the achievements and lessons learned of the “Covenant of Mayors Demonstration Projects".

The conference will provide a unique opportunity for stepping up joint efforts for sustainable municipal development and sharing the experience of successful modernization of urban infrastructure in the EaP cities.

**Media representatives are invited to take part in the press-conference to be held on October 26, 2016 at 10:00 and signing ceremony at 17:45** in a Conference Hall of Yerevan Marriott Hotel. Prior accreditation is required and will be open until **15:00 of October, 25, 2016** by e-mail:[abegloian@gmail.com](mailto:abegloian@gmail.com) or tel: +37499 881018. The journalists are welcome to take part in all the activities according to the conference agenda. **The next day, October 27, 2016** the press-point will be operational throughout the event.

For further information please contact Ms. Tatiana Derevyankina, the CoM East Communication Manager, tel.: + 380 44 332-66-08, e-mail: [tatiana.derevyankina@eumayors.eu](file:///C:\Users\Maryana\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\8DXMFYMB\tatiana.derevyankina@eumayors.eu)

http://www.eumayors.eu, http://www.soglasheniemerov.eu

**Background:**

***Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy*** is an urban climate and energy initiative of the European Union bringing together local, regional and national authorities voluntarily committed to implementing the EU climate and energy objectives. The CoM initiative was launched in 2008 by the European Commission after the adoption of the 2020 EU Climate and Energy Package. Building on the success of the Covenant of Mayors, the Mayors Adapt initiative was set up in 2014 to engage cities in taking action to adapt to climate change. At the end of 2015, the two initiatives merged under the new integrated Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy, adopting the EU 2030 objectives and an integrated approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation. With over 7000 signatories representing over 210 million citizens, it has become one of the world’s largest climate and energy initiatives.

***Covenant of Mayors East (CoM East)*** is the EU-funded project aimed at introducing the EU climate and energy initiative to the Eastern Partnership countries. CoM East supports local authorities in implementing sustainable energy policies, reducing their dependency on fossil fuels, improving the security of energy supply, and facilitates their contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

***Mayors for Economic Growth (M4EG)*** is an upcoming initiative of the European Union inspired by the Covenant of Mayors concept and success, but applied to the economic field. As such, the project will support local authorities in the Eastern Partnership countries to become active facilitators for economic growth and job creation by strengthening their technical skills and capacities to implement smart local economic strategies, in line with the principles of good governance and sound financial management.