



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **CONCERTO – the central part in the EU’s energy strategy in cities**

#### **European Sustainable Energy Week Conference, February 1, 2008**

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM—Cities must be at the forefront of the battle against global warming, a major conference on urban energy use was told on 1st February. Speakers at the event, 'CONCERTO: A benchmark for excellence', emphasised the crucial role renewable energy use and energy efficiency in cities will play, as the European Union aims for significant greenhouse gas emission cuts by 2020.

Matthias Ruete, Director General of the European Commission's Directorate General for Transport and Energy told delegates "cities play a key role as they are important electricity consumers." Focusing on cities, the EU can achieve its 2020 targets for CO2 reduction, renewable energy, and energy efficiency.

The conference heard that while cities cover only three percent of the EU's surface, they account for 80 percent of the buildings, and 75 percent of carbon dioxide emissions. Urban buildings are thus the most effective target for improving EU energy supply security, generating energy savings, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and thereby tackling climate change.

The CONCERTO initiative is already playing a central role in this. CONCERTO is a network of 46 towns and cities from across the EU working on urban energy efficiency and sustainability. CONCERTO unites separate projects and demonstration activities, thus significantly extending their impact and reach.

CONCERTO members work on areas as diverse as eco-buildings, onsite renewables, energy efficient building design and management, combined heat and power, and environmentally friendly district heating. Crucially CONCERTO makes policy recommendations, and its activities can be scaled-up and adapted across the whole EU.

"CONCERTO provides a platform to share experiences on the internationally most advanced concepts and technologies for eco-buildings, and to assess the potential of different policy measures", Ruete said. "The strength of CONCERTO is not just the integration of various

technologies. The CONCERTO communities all over Europe are “real life” experiences: people actually live and work in this environment and can thus provide the experts with a first-hand feed-back on the advantages and challenges.”

However, the conference acknowledged that there are no quick fix solutions. Challenges to overcome include lack of incentives for new investments, an energy infrastructure in need of modernisation, and the expense of adapting to low-carbon energy supplies. The European Commission said it would address these barriers by reinforcing political commitment, by focusing on legal and technical frameworks needed to promote the CONCERTO goals, and by reviewing financing and investment issues.

In his concluding remarks, Mr. Andris Piebalgs, Energy Commissioner stated “CONCERTO has been an innovative idea; it is now time to bring things forward, and to move to other dimensions. We need to think together about new ways of overcoming the bottlenecks and barriers which prevent the inflow of investments for sustainable energy buildings. To forge practical, transparent and fair policies on financing, which attract capital, entrepreneurs and give energy funding its fair share in the overall Government spending, we need to dig deeper into the matter. I invite all of you and especially the financing community to join us in this exciting project” Piebalgs said in closing.

For more information on the CONCERTO initiative please refer to the CONCERTO Website: [www.concertoplus.eu](http://www.concertoplus.eu)

High resolution pictures from the CONCERTO event will be available at: [www.concertoplus.eu](http://www.concertoplus.eu)

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