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**FROM:**

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**PRESS RELEASE**



The cities network "SUSTAINABLE CITY" organized its **6th Annual Conference and General Assembly** at CROWNE PLAZE Athens Hotel, on 14 December 2022. On the key topic "**The Challenge of the Energy Crisis – Opportunities for Municipalities**", SUSTAINABLE CITY Network invited to the Conference all Mayors of its municipalities-members, as well as important representatives of the Government, the Mayors of Attica and representatives of other relevant bodies.

The keynote speech of the Conference was delivered by the representative of the European Support Office of the Covenant of Mayors on Climate and Energy, Mr. **Pedro Bizzaro**, while an address was delivered by the Director of External Resources and Knowledge Strategy of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, Mr. **Durmish Guri**. The honorary guests from the European Union emphasized the climate change challenge and Europe's effort and planning towards alleviating the problem through initiatives such as the Covenant of Mayors.

The Conference was attended and addressed by the Deputy Minister of Interior, Mr. **Stelios Petsas**, who also spoke about the continuity of achievements and projects in Local Government by bodies aiming at improving the lives of citizens; the MP of Messinia and former Minister of Economy and Development & Interior, Mr. **Alexis Charitsis**, highlighting the constructive role of SUSTAINABLE CITY and networks in general, the President of KEDE (Central Union of Municipalities and Communities), Mr. **Dimitris Papastergiou**, who referred to the difficulties of Local Government saying that these are actually existing and accumulated, and the Prefect of Attica, Mr. **George**

**Patoulis**, who acknowledged SUSTAINABLE CITY Network as a tool to facilitate the procedures faced by Municipalities.

The President of the Network and General Secretary of KEDE, Mr. **Dimitris Kafantaris** thanked the guests for their participation and stressed the important role of SUSTAINABLE CITY in helping municipalities overcome the obstacles they face in implementing European programmes, as well as other difficulties, such as the current energy crisis. He also made a flash back in history referring to the effort of establishing and setting up the network.

With the opening of the Conference, the General Manager of SUSTAINABLE CITY, Mr. **Ioannis Georgizas** presented the European programmes and actions in the Municipalities that are successfully implemented so far, the impressive development of activities during the short period of its operation, showcasing the support and co-operation possibilities the network offers to Municipalities.

The Conference was divided in three thematic sessions. The **first session entitled “Energy, Environment and Financial tools”** was attended by the General Secretary of Interior and Organization of the Ministry of Interior, Mr. **Michalis Stavrianoudakis**, the General Secretary for Public Investment and NSRF, Mr. **Dimitris Skalkos**, the Special Secretary for European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund Programme Management, Mr. **George Zervos**, and the President of the GREEN FUND, Mr. **Stathis Stathopoulos**, analysing the financial instruments available to be utilised by Municipalities.

In the **second thematic session entitled “Energy crisis and mitigation actions in Municipalities”**, the participants were the Mayor of Messini, Mr. **George Athanasopoulos**, the Mayor of Souli, Mr. **Ioannis Karagiannis**, the Mayor of Almyros, Mr. **Evangelos Chatzikyriakos**, and the representative of the Centre for Renewable Energy Sources and Saving (CRES) from Division for Energy Policy and Planning, Ms **Argyro Giakoumi**, discussing how they have tried to alleviate the energy crisis impact in their regions and implement energy saving projects.

In the **third and final session, entitled “Best practices in Municipalities and innovative applications”**, consisted of the Mayor of Chalki, Mr. **Evangelos Fragakakis**, the Mayor of Vari – Voula – Vouliagmeni, Mr. **Grigoris Konstantellos**, the Physics - Environmentalist MSc and Scientific Associate of SUSTAINABLE CITY Network, Ms **Theodora Andrinopoulou**, the Associate Professor of International Hellenic University, Mr. **Michalis Chalaris**, and the President and CEO of AUG Signals, Mr. **George Lampropoulos**, citing innovative applications and examples of best practices from the organisations they represented, on the energy crisis, but also on civil protection and the environment in general.

The panel coordinators were the General Director of SUSTAINABLE CITY Network, Mr. **Ioannis Georgizas**, the Associate Professor of the Faculty of Electrical Engineers and Computer Engineering of the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA), Mr. **Haris Doukas**, and the Mayor of Pella and Vice-President of SUSTAINABLE CITY Network, Mr. **Grigoris Stamkos**. The general coordination of the event was covered by the journalist of ERT (National Television Broadcaster), Ms **Nina Kasimati**.

The Conference provided an opportunity for the participants to learn about the **funding opportunities** likely to be used, to learn about the current European programmes being implemented, to listen to representatives from other Municipalities presenting their efforts to relieve citizens from phenomena such as the **energy crisis** and **environmental issues**, as well as their best practices; to ask questions to speakers and envisage a citizen-focused future aimed at improving people’s daily lives.

All attendees at the Conference were offered a bottle of olive oil from Pylos, sponsored by **P. TSAGLIS S.A.**, an organic Cretan **TOPLOU** raki sponsored by TOPLOU monastery and the Municipality of Ierapetra, as well as Agiorgitiko wine from the **Cooperative Winery of Nemea** through the kind mediation of the Municipality of Nemea.