<u>Declaration for the launch of the Smart Cities & Communities Initiative</u>

by Commissioner Oettinger

➢ Today, the European Commission launches the Smart Cities & Communities Initiative in the framework of the Strategic Energy Technology Plan. With this initiative, the Commission commits to making all the best efforts to support, in close cooperation with the business sector, European cities and communities in their efforts to develop innovative, integrated and widely replicable sustainable solutions.

➢ The European Union has committed to ambitious energy and climate objectives by 2020 and to developing a low carbon economy by 2050. To achieve these objectives, today's energy system has to fundamentally change. Cities are at the heart of this process. It will only be possible to fulfil the European objectives if today's cities are turned into efficient, low carbon Smart Cities supported by Smart Communities.

➢ Many cities and businesses have already made remarkable progress in this direction and have acquired valuable knowledge that is worth sharing. They are a source of inspiration for the Smart Cities & Communities Initiative when it seeks to develop model solutions and to disseminate knowledge and best practices across Europe.

➢ Diverse in many respects, European cities and communities are faced with the common challenge to use and produce energy in a much more sustainable and efficient manner and to ensure citizens' quality of life. The Smart Cities & Communities Initiative aims to support the search for solutions to these challenges by bundling demand, attracting a variety of stakeholders, involving business and citizens and creating markets for sustainable and efficient model solutions.

➢ Today, the European Commission proposes to enter into partnership with the business sector, public authorities, citizens, the research community and all other relevant stakeholders who are dedicated to take up the challenge of preparing Europe's cities for the future and sharing a common vision and commitment for European 'Smart cities and communities'.

➢ With the Smart Cities & Communities Initiative, the European Commission aims more particularly at:

  o engaging with the business sector and public authorities to realise ambitious technological demonstration programmes which will promote innovative integrated applications of low carbon technologies in cities;

  o achieving significant impact and high replication across the European Union for these programmes in the areas of energy efficiency; production of renewable energy, smart distribution grids, urban mobility and information and communication technologies;

  o demonstrating concrete technological and economic solutions to practically support the measures as proposed in the area of energy efficiency;

  o proposing innovative organisational and economic solutions;

  o accelerating the large scale deployment of these low carbon technologies and measures at local level.

➢ The European Commission calls on

- o Private and public stakeholders to mobilise around the challenge to develop a common vision and, together with European Commission, the actions which will make low carbon technologies commercially interesting at local level;

- o National, regional and local authorities to support and replicate the projects and solutions tested in the Smart Cities & Communities Initiative through their programmes;

- o Local business, utilities, house owners, citizens' associations, technology providers, financial institutions and research institutions to actively contribute to the development and implementation of innovative energy and transport solutions, and the innovative application of digital technologies, to ensure the citizens' jobs, quality of life and provide a competitive edge to the EU industry.