

Survey on the future of the Covenant of Mayors - Europe initiative

Main Results

(November 2020)

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About the survey: Scope and objectives

In 2020, the Covenant of Mayors - Europe is reaching an important milestone linked to its 2020 targets, but also a decisive turning point. It is time to set a new course for the initiative in a new political landscape and a challenging post-COVID-19 recovery phase.

The online survey conducted during the summer 2020 aimed at collecting local and regional authorities' views and suggestions on the future of the Covenant initiative in Europe. The outcome will be used to reposition the initiative in its new (policy, social, economic) context and transform it so that it bests support climate transition and empowers local authorities in the recovery process.

You will also find a summary of the survey results in the Covenant of Mayors online library at <https://www.eumayors.eu/support/library.html>

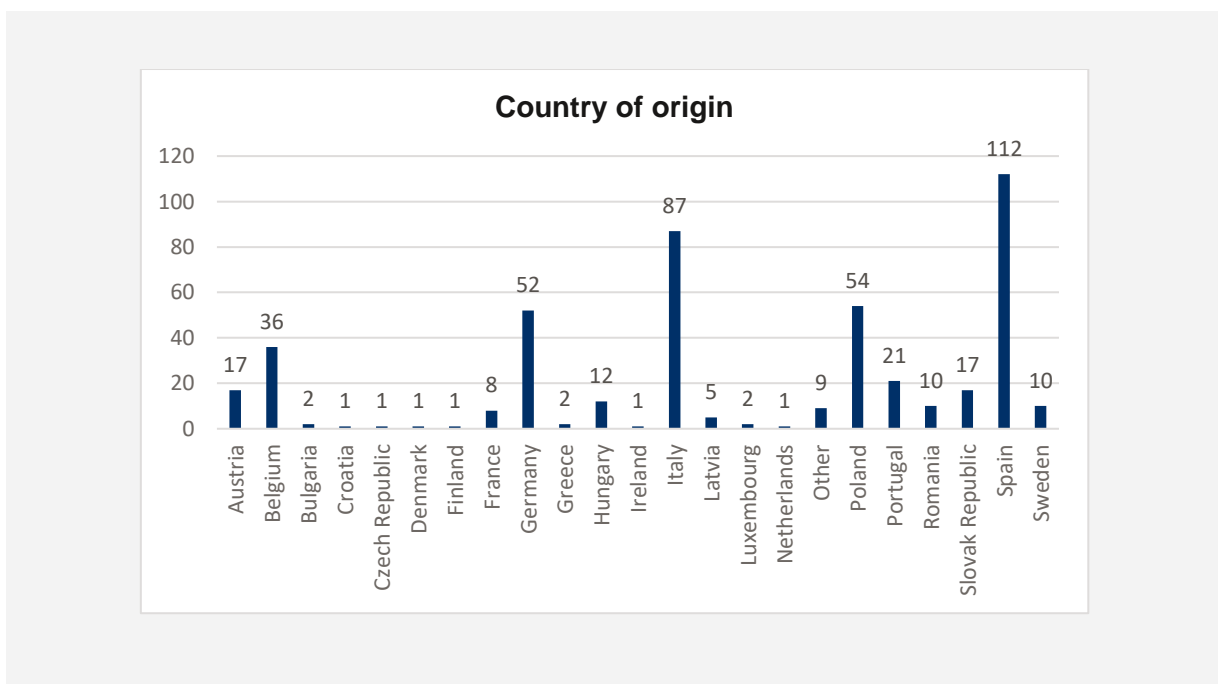
Profile of the survey respondents

In total, 462 cities and regions from over 23 countries responded to the online survey. 66% of them are already committed to the Covenant of Mayors - Europe as signatories, 5% as Coordinators.

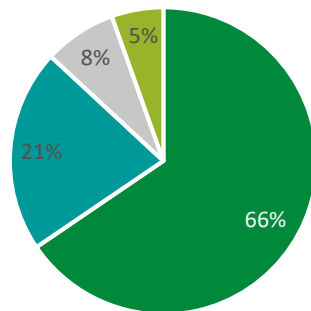
Respondents are widely spread across European countries. Spain and Italy – which are the countries with the highest number of Covenant signatories – are the most represented in this survey (24% and 19% respectively). There is also a large number of respondents from Poland (12%), Germany (11%) and Belgium (8%).

The profiles of the respondents vary in size, from small villages to large metropolis. The majority of the respondents are medium-sized: 27% are municipalities with a population between 5,000 and 20,000 inhabitants, and 26% between 20,000 and 100,000 inhabitants.

Overall, the sample of respondents is considered representative of the European Covenant of Mayors Community in terms of number of signatories covered, geographical coverage and size.

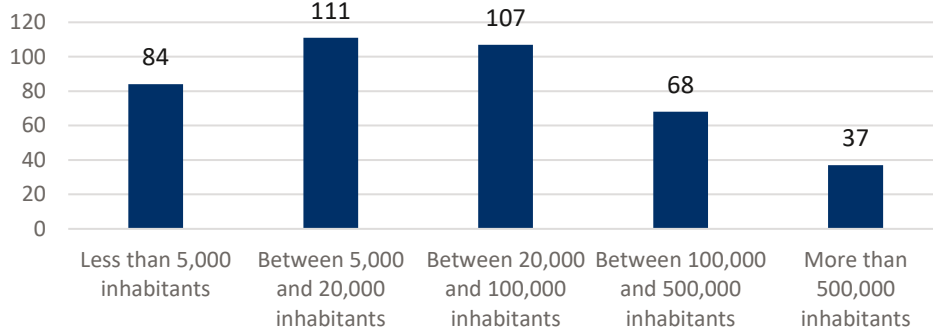


Covenant of Mayors Commitment



- City or town already committed to the Covenant of Mayors - Europe as a signatory
- City/town or region/province not yet committed to the Covenant of Mayors - Europe
- Other
- Region or province already committed to the Covenant of Mayors - Europe as a Coordinator

Size of the city/region

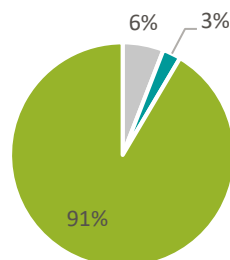


1. Scaling up ambition – On the way to climate-neutral and resilient cities

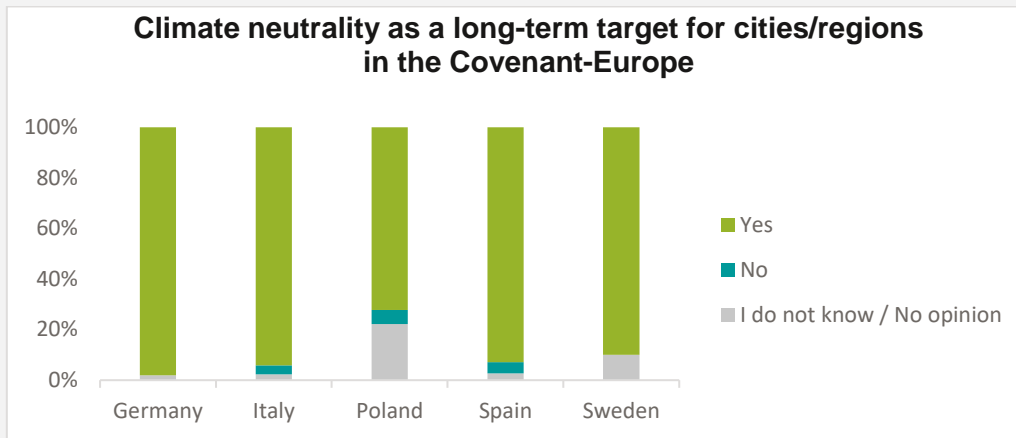
Committing to climate neutrality

- 91% of the respondents are in favour of making climate neutrality a long-term target for cities/regions in the Covenant of Mayors - Europe. Only 3% are against.

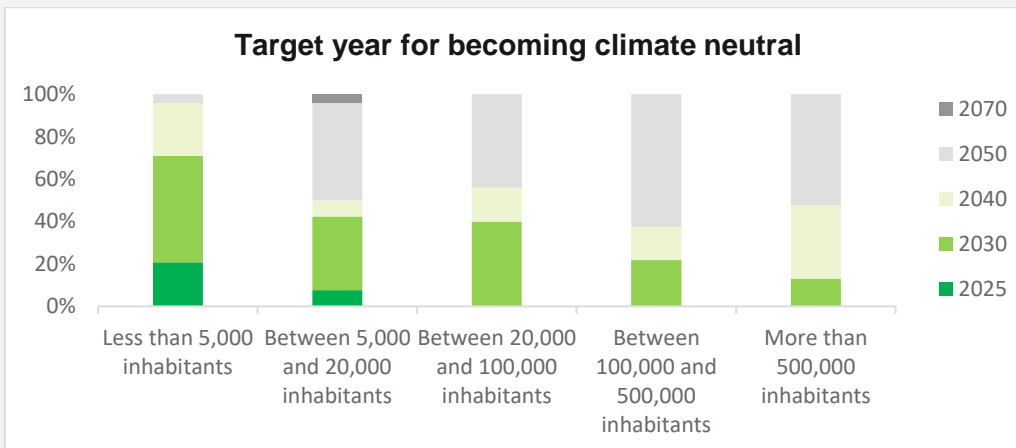
Climate neutrality as a long-term target for cities/regions in the Covenant-Europe



→ Differences between countries:

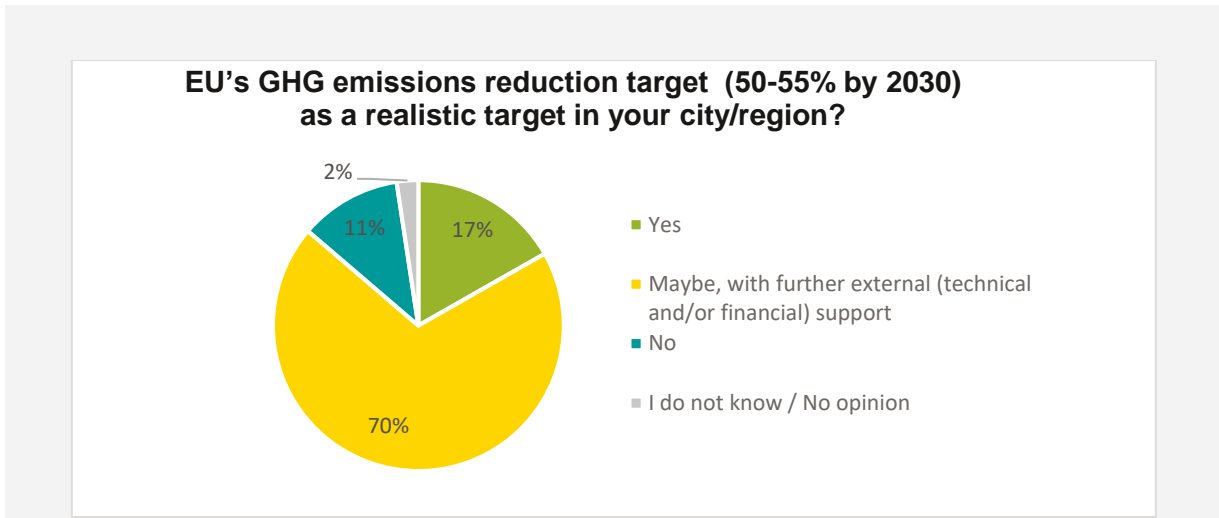


→ Differences between respondents' size:



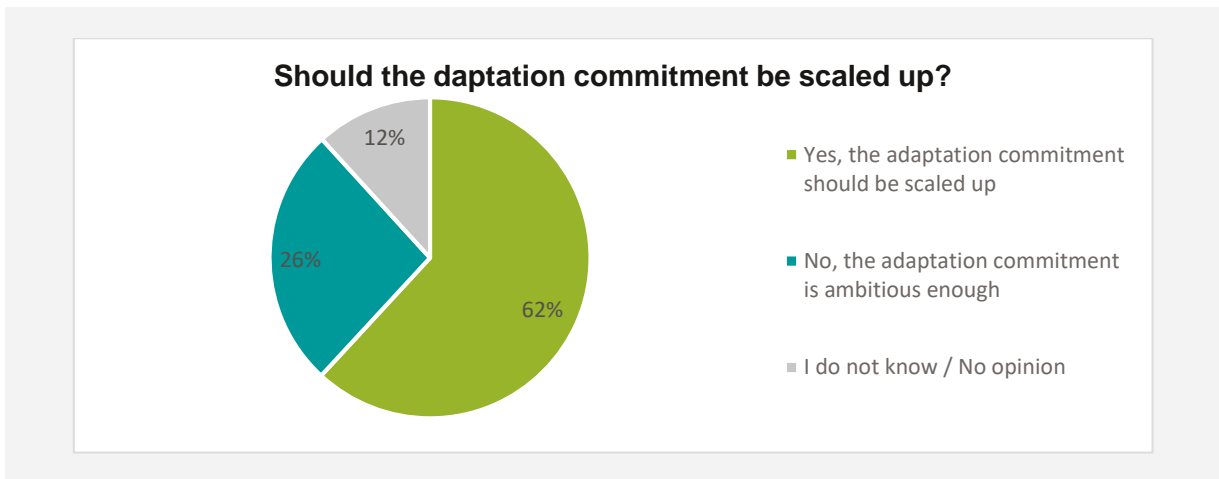
Increasing the 2030 greenhouse gas emission reduction target

Most of the respondents consider an increased GHG target achievable by 2030 (17% 'yes', 70% 'maybe'), but highlight however the need for further external support.

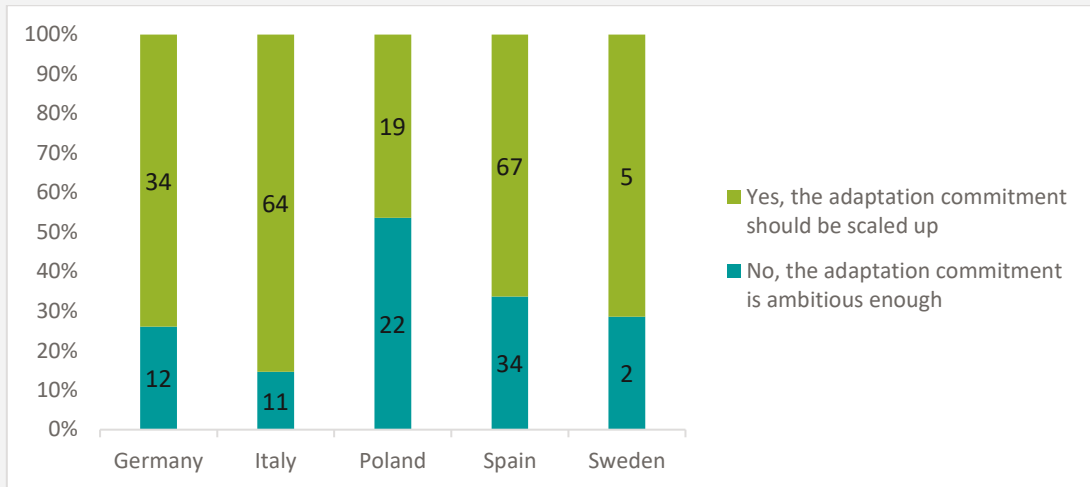


Scaling up the adaptation commitment

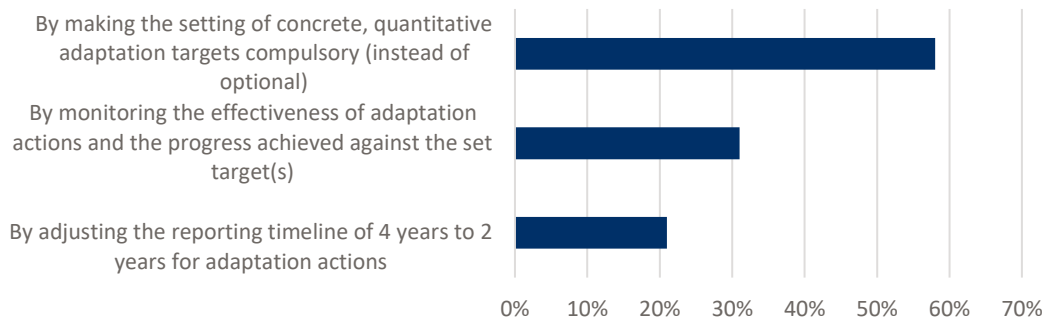
62% of the respondents would be in favour of scaling up the Covenant of Mayors adaptation commitment, 58% of them by making adaptation targets compulsory.



→ Differences between countries:



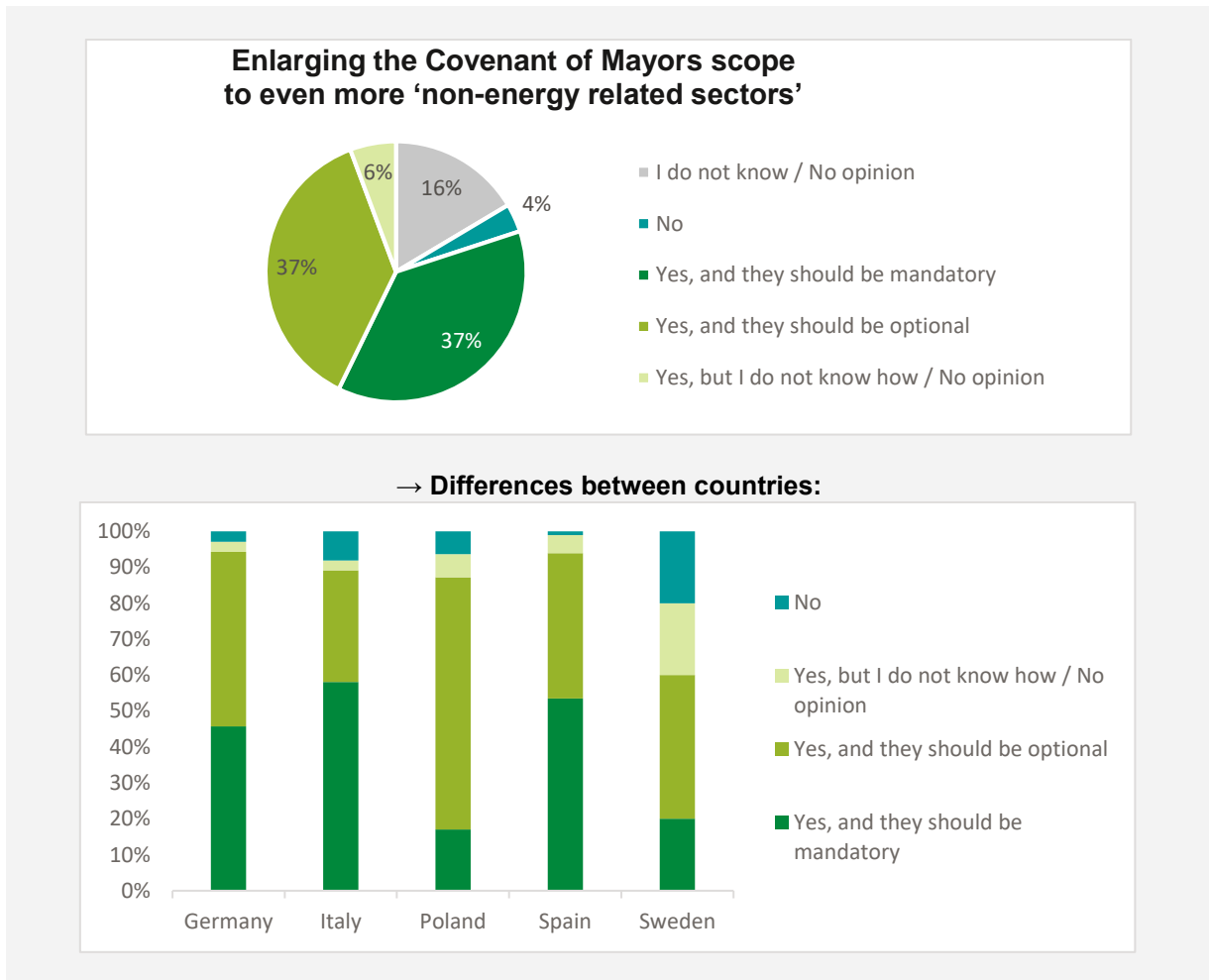
How should the adaptation commitment be scaled up?



Just over half of the respondents (**58%**) who want the objectives to be scaled up consider that it should be done by “making the setting of concrete, quantitative adaptation targets compulsory (instead of optional)”; and **31%** propose to “monitor the effectiveness of adaptation actions and the progress achieved against the set target(s)”. Only **21%** of them indicate that it could be done by “adjusting the reporting timeline of 4 years to 2 years for adaptation actions”.

2. Enlarging the scope of action

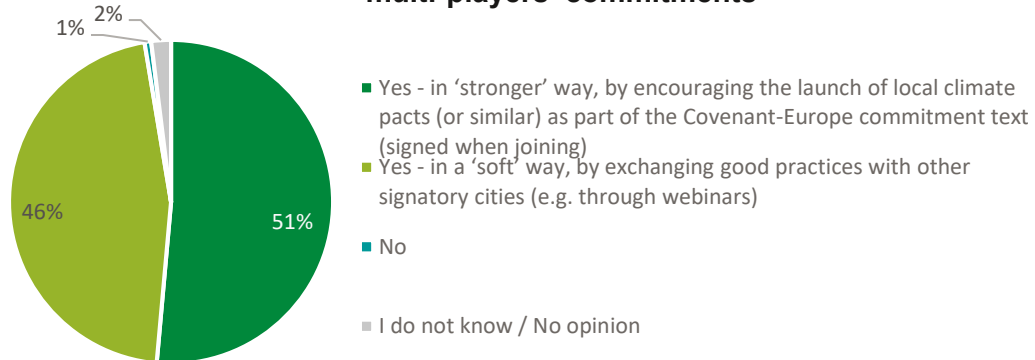
74% of the participants declare that they have already taken actions to reduce emissions in 'non-energy related sectors', and a large majority of respondents (80%) support the idea to enlarge the scope of the Covenant of Mayors to even more 'non-energy related sectors', either as a mandatory or optional reporting requirement (37% each).



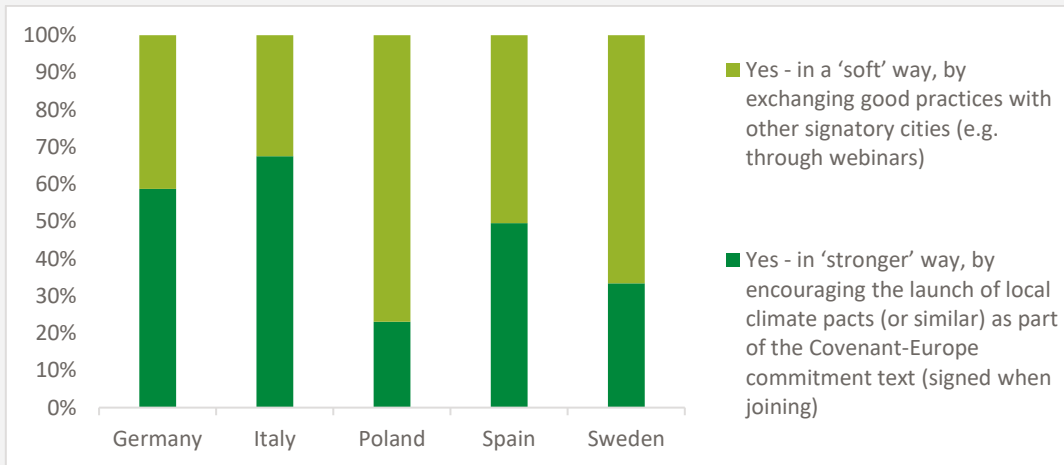
3. Broadening commitments – towards wider societal engagement

- While half of the respondents has already launched a broad societal engagement process or is planning to, 41% of them are interested in doing so.
- 97% of the respondents are in favour of promoting multi-players' commitments (e.g. citizens, businesses) in the Covenant, either in a 'soft' or a 'stronger' way (46% and 51% respectively). Only 1% is against.
- Overall, there is no major difference from one country to another in terms of respondents' support to promote multi-players' commitment as part of the Covenant of Mayors in Europe.
- When looking at the size of the respondents, big cities (with more than 500,000 inhabitants) are more largely in favour of launching local climate pacts (or similar) as part of the Covenant.

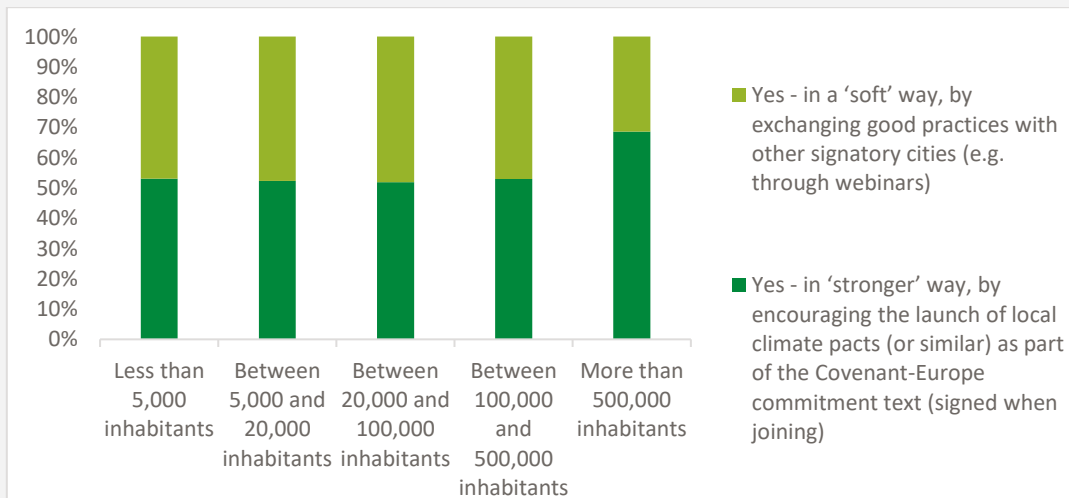
The Covenant of Mayors - Europe as an initiative promoting multi-players' commitments



→ Differences between countries:



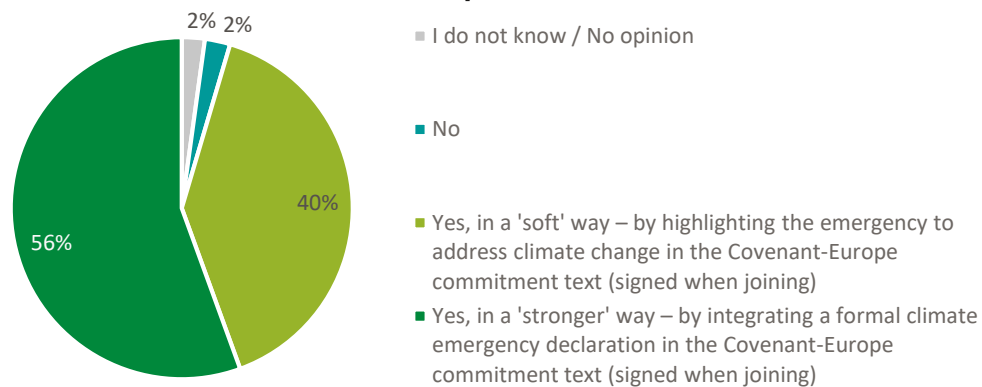
→ Differences between respondents' size:



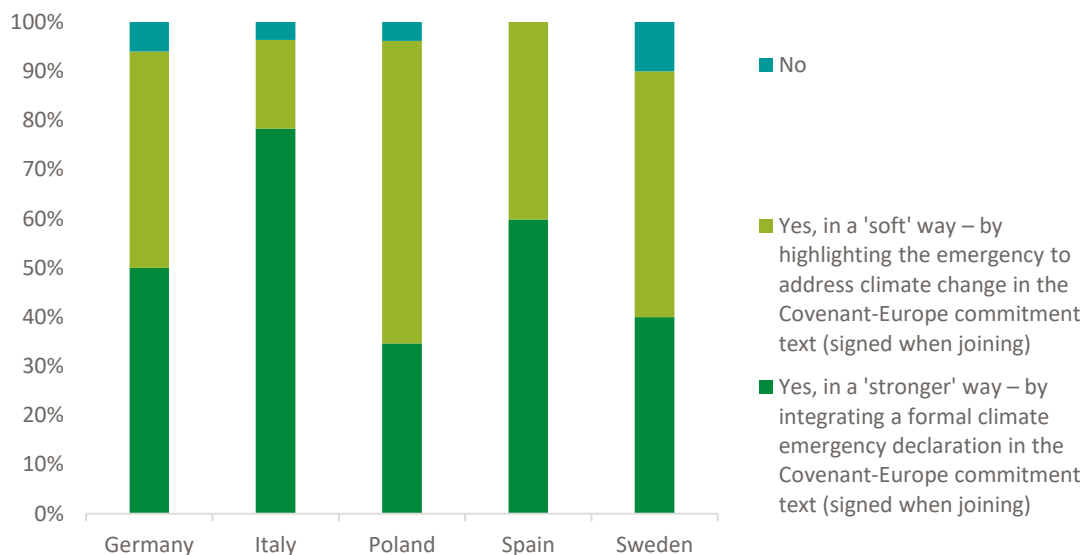
4. Climate emergency

- More than half of the respondents have already declared climate emergency and/or made climate policy a priority; 35% are considering doing so.
- A very large majority of respondents (96% in total) declares being in favour of further emphasizing the climate emergency in the framework of the Covenant of Mayors - Europe, either in a 'soft' or 'stronger' way (40% and 56% respectively). However, this varies depending on the country (see graph below, showing a preference for the "soft way" in Poland, while Spain or Italy are in favour of a "stronger" way for instance).

Climate emergency emphasized in the Covenant of Mayors - Europe



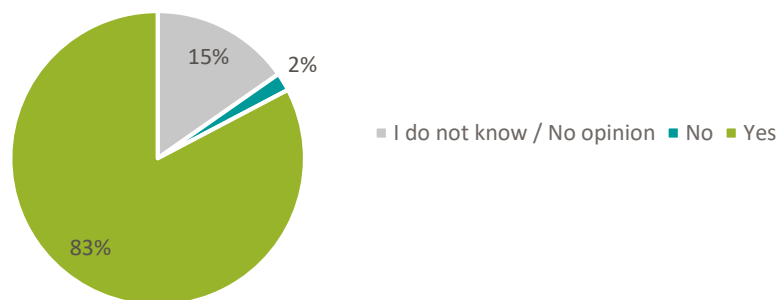
→ Differences between countries:



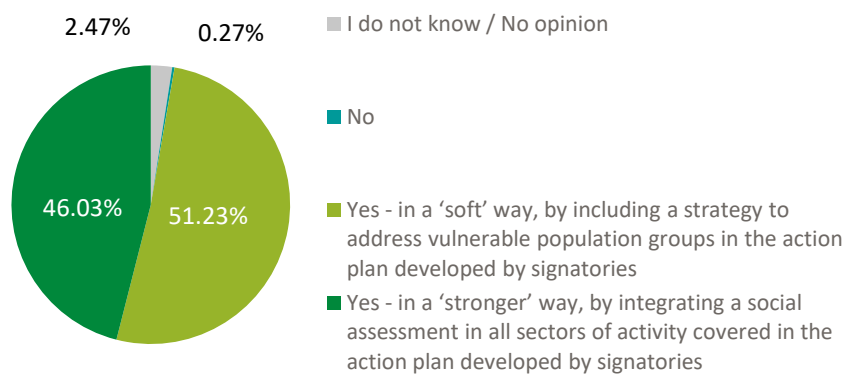
5. Ensuring a just transition for all

- 83% of the respondents would agree to integrate a 'just transition for all' as a cross-cutting core principle for all Covenant actions; only 2% would be against.
- Over 97% of those would be in favour of further emphasizing the "just transition" concept in the Covenant-Europe, but have diverging opinion on the way (51% for the 'soft' way and 46% for the 'stronger' way).
- Note that the proportion of participants who do not know or have no opinion on integrating a 'just transition for all' as a cross-cutting core principle is quite important (15%), showing that the concept still needs further explanation.

A 'just transition for all' integrated as a cross-cutting core principle in the Covenant of Mayors - Europe

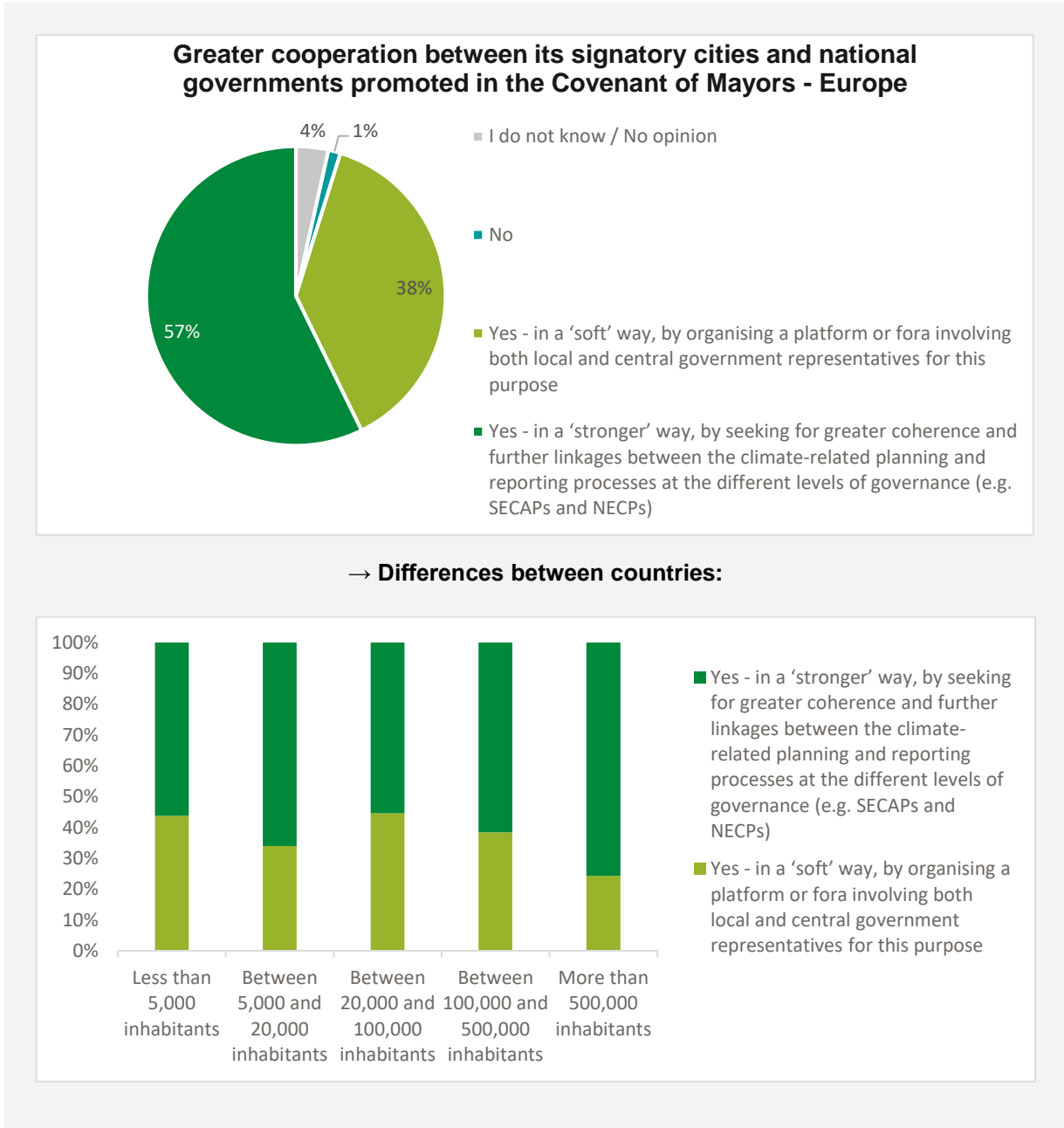


Way of integrating it



6. Fostering cooperation between the different levels of governance

95% of the participants point out that the Covenant of Mayors should promote greater cooperation between its signatory cities and national governments. A majority of them calling for a 'stronger' push in this direction.

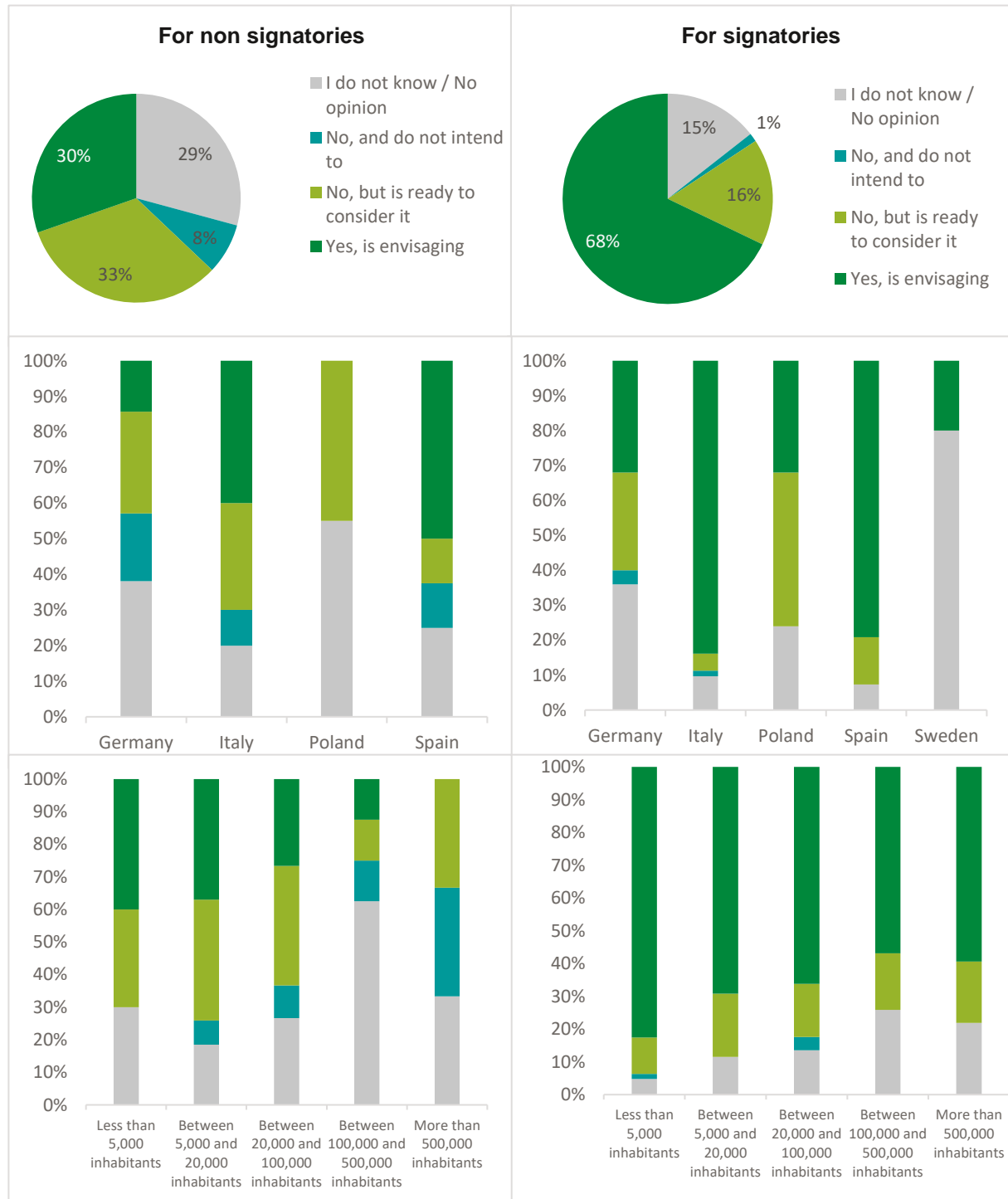


7. About the respondents' commitments and ambition

Covenant of Mayors - Europe commitment

- 30% of the respondents who have not committed to the Covenant-Europe yet intend to envisage it.
- 68% of respondents who are already engaged in the Covenant would be ready to renew their engagement; 16% would be ready to consider renewing; only 1% would be against.
- Smaller cities seem to be more likely ready to sign up or renew their engagements.

Intentions to sign up / renew their commitment to the Covenant of Mayors

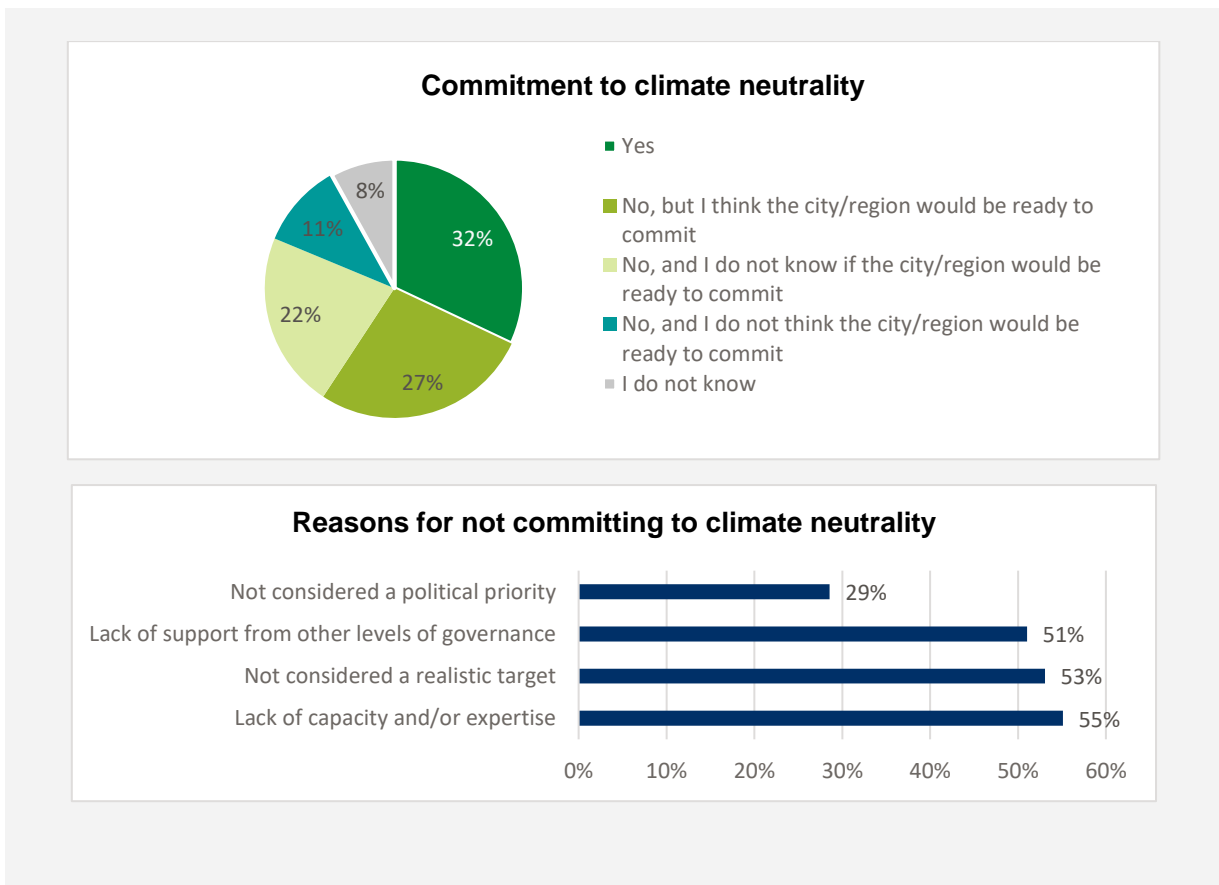


Political ambition

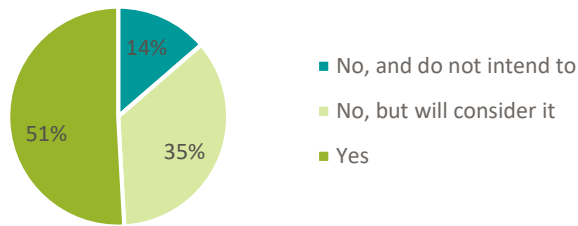
Throughout the survey, we can observe that the respondents' political ambition is already pretty high:

- More than half of the respondents have committed to or would be ready to commit to climate neutrality (32% and 27% respectively). In terms of target year, most of the cities already committed aim to reach 'climate neutrality' by 2050 (43%), or before 2050 (55%).
- 32% of the respondents have already committed to climate neutrality and 27% would be ready to. Only 11% do not think that their city/region would be ready to.
 - Among those 11%, most point out a lack of capacity and/or expertise (55%), the lack of support from other levels of governance (51%) or do not consider climate neutrality as a realistic target (53%). Only 29% of the 11% do not consider it a political priority (3% of all respondents).
- 51% of the respondents have already declared climate emergency and/or made climate policy a priority; 35% consider doing so. It shows climate change is high on the political agenda of the local authorities.
- 74% of the respondents declare that they have already taken actions to reduce emissions in 'non-energy related sectors'.
- Half of the respondents have launched or are planning to launch a broad societal engagement process. 41% of them would be interested in doing so.
- Only 8% of the respondents consider that they are acknowledged "to a great extent" in national policies and plans, and 56% indicate not being involved in a multi-level dialogue.

However, there is still a potential for scaling up local ambition, renewing or committing to further commitments, but also for translating those into action. Cities/regions need further support in this process, a support that the Covenant of Mayors – Europe initiative is ready to provide even more in the coming months and years.



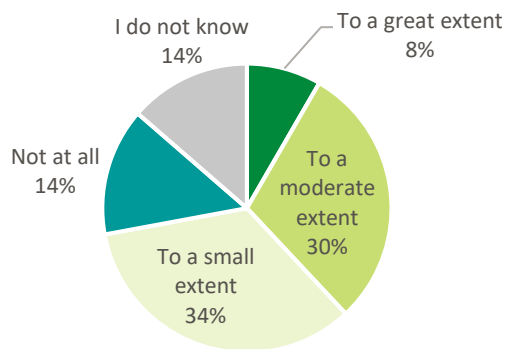
Climate emergency already declared and/or climate policy made a political priority



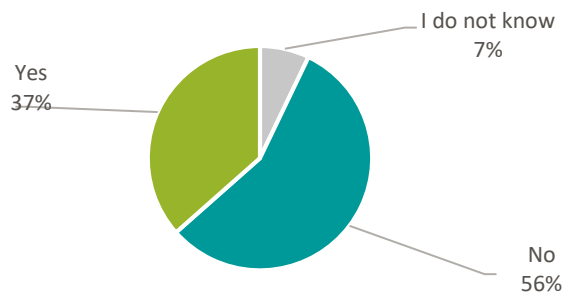
In its Climate and Energy strategy, my city/region:



Local actions considered as sufficiently acknowledged in national policies and plans (e.g. NECPs)

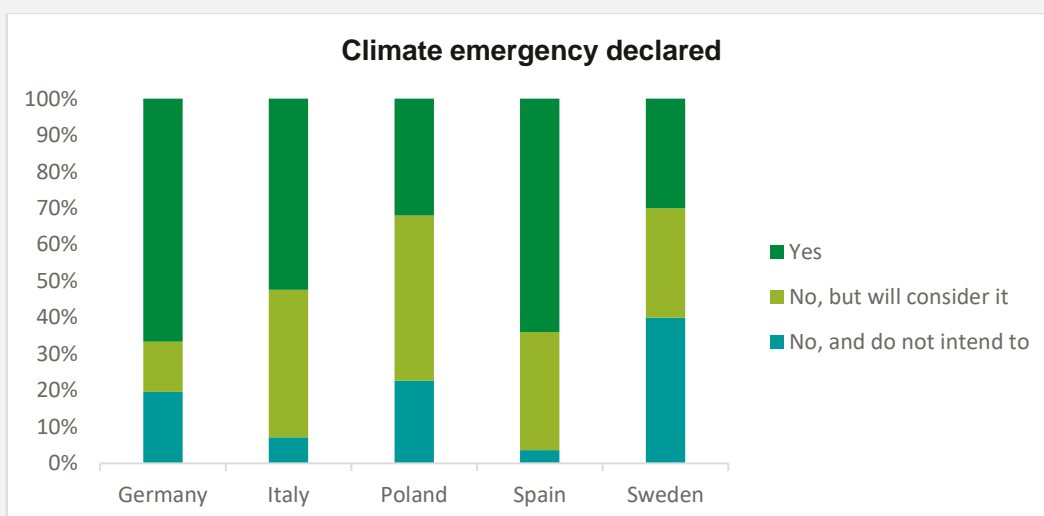
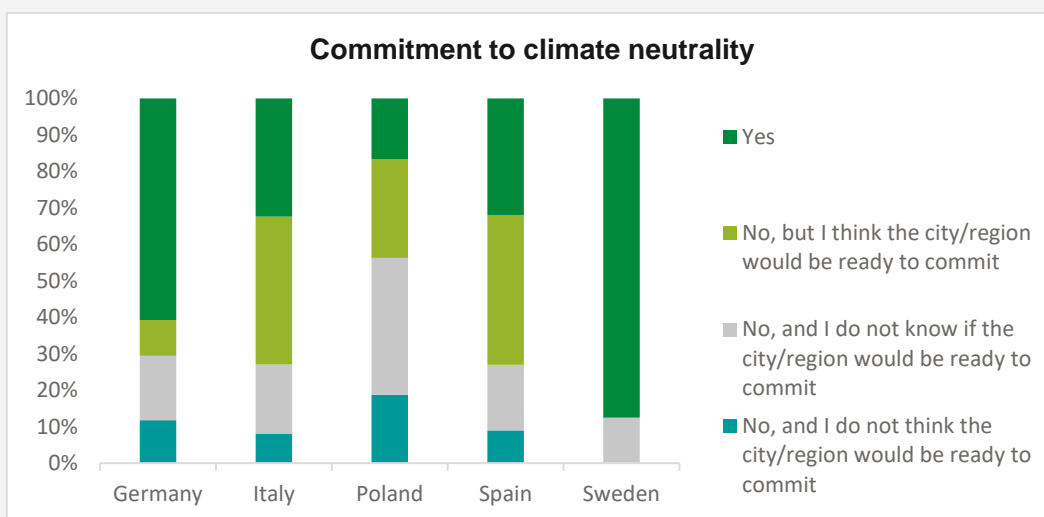


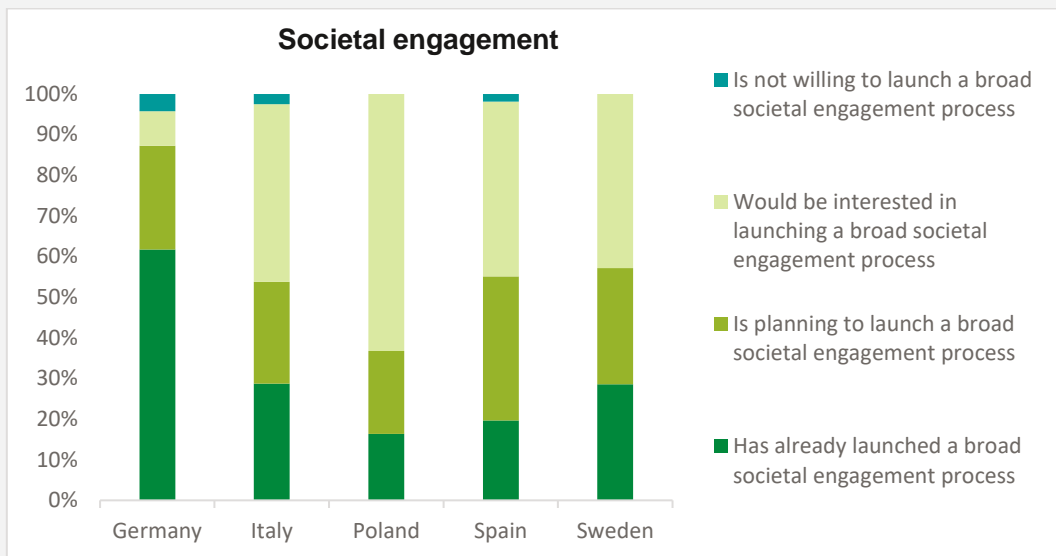
Involvement in a multi-level dialogue with your national government and other stakeholders on national energy and climate policies



In addition, it is noteworthy that the respondents' replies can significantly vary from one country to another, for instance:

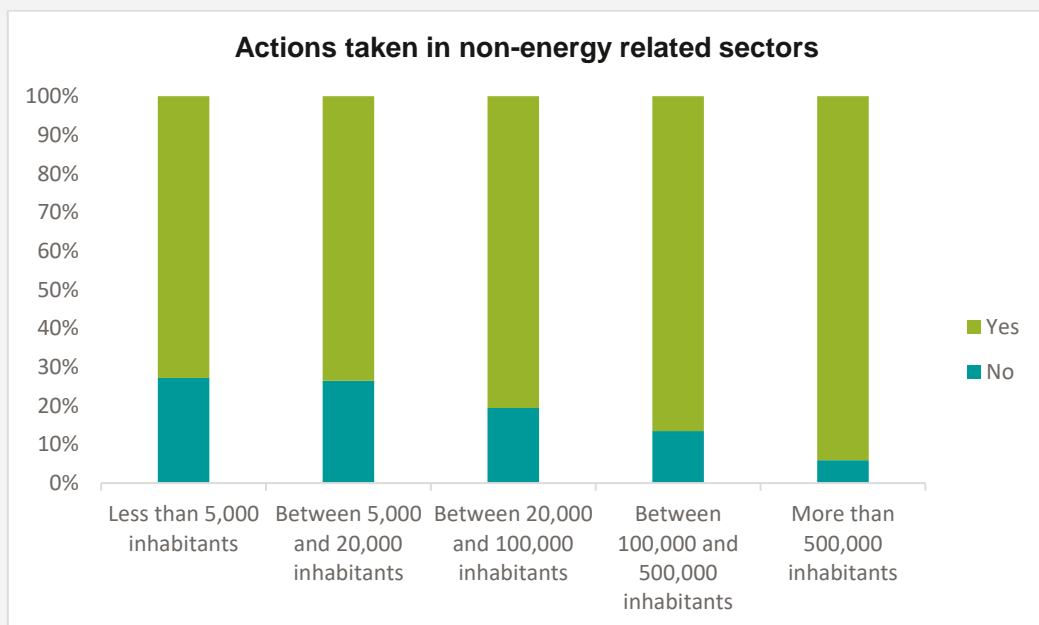
- **In Germany, the processes appear to be more advanced:**
 - Among the German respondents, only a few cities have not already committed to climate neutrality or declared climate emergency.
 - Almost all respondents have already launched or have planned to launch a broad societal engagement process.
- **In Spain and Italy, there is a huge potential for cities to scale up their political ambition:**
 - Among the Spanish/Italian respondents, many cities/regions have not committed to climate neutrality yet, but are ready to (41% - Spain and 43% - Italy).
 - 43% Spanish and 44% Italian respondents are interested in launching a broad societal engagement process.
- **In Poland, the situation appears more challenging – although there is also political will to move forward** (for example in declaring climate emergency or in committing to climate neutrality). The potential should not be underestimated considering the following:
 - 27% of Polish respondents would be ready to commit to climate neutrality.
 - 45% consider being ready to declare climate emergency.
 - 63% are interested in launching a broad societal process.

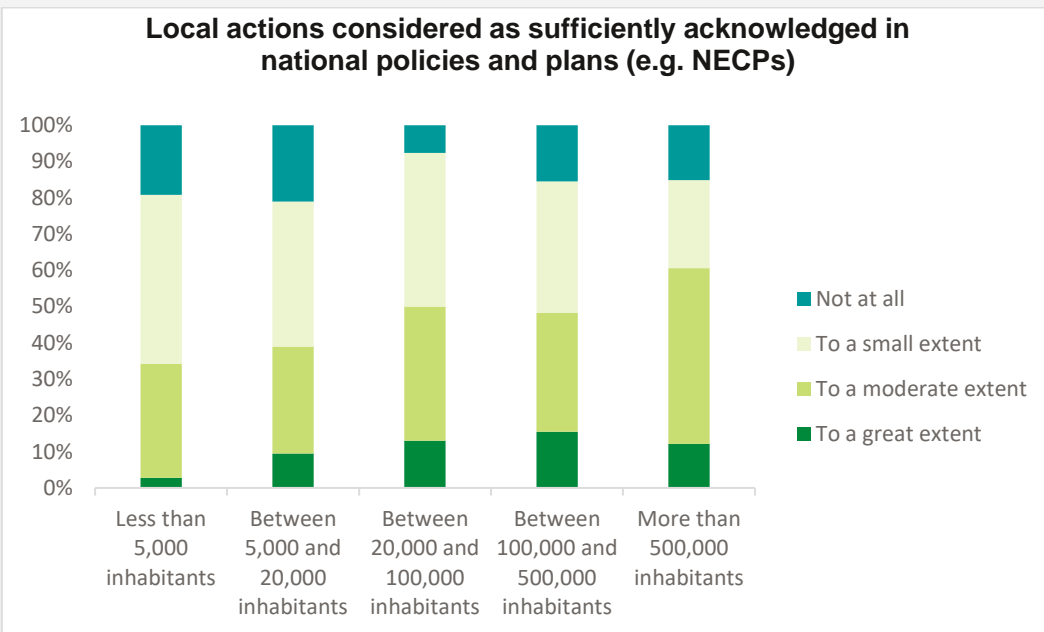
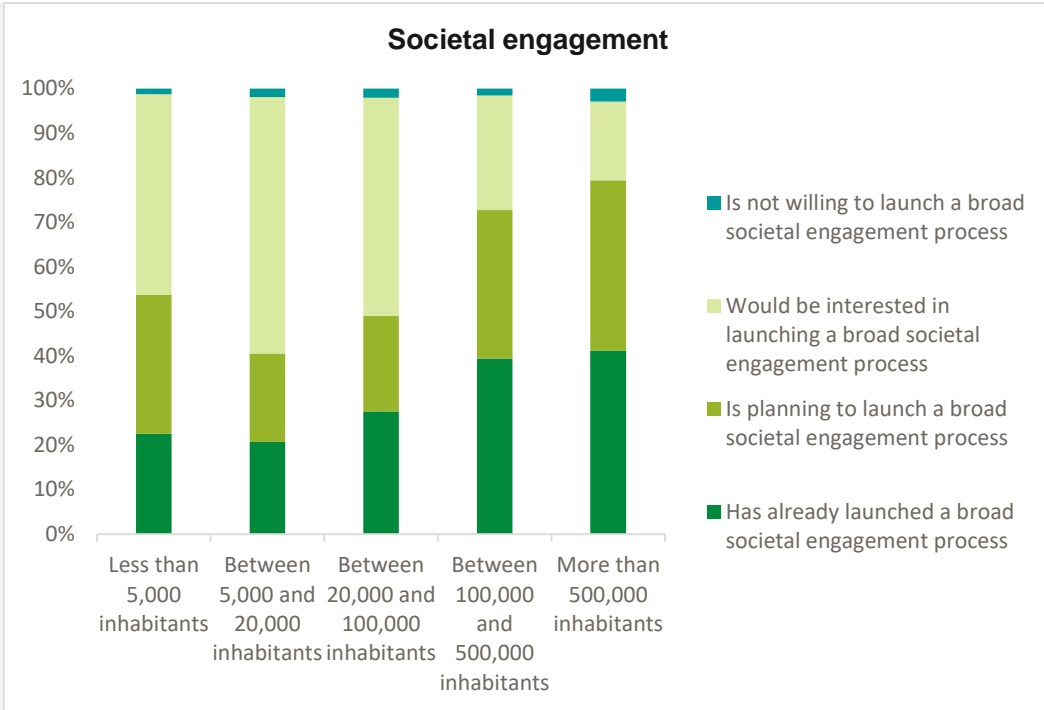




Differences can also be observed depending on the size of the cities:

- The bigger the cities are,
 - the more they have taken action in non-energy related sectors;
 - the more they are committed to multiplayer's engagement.
 - the more they find that their actions are acknowledged in national policies and the more they feel involved in a multi-level dialogue.





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