Interreg Europe

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DISCO

NEWSLETTER #1

We're excited to welcome you to the first edition of the DISCO project newsletter!

DISCO – **Advancing District Heating and Cooling Solutions for Efficient Waste Heat Utilization** – is a newly launched Interreg Europe project bringing together 10 partner organisations from across Europe. Our shared goal is clear: to reduce carbon emissions and energy costs by reusing industrial waste heat through improved district heating and cooling systems.

Although the technology to capture and reuse waste heat already exists, many public authorities lack the right tools, strategies, and capacity to implement these solutions effectively. DISCO addresses this gap by supporting regional and local governments through knowledge exchange, pilot initiatives, and policy development.

Led by the North Sweden Energy Agency, DISCO places regional perspectives at the core. In this first newsletter, each of the 10 partners introduces their organisation, shares their motivation for joining the project, and outlines how they hope to contribute over the coming years.

Together, we're laying the groundwork for smarter energy systems and stronger climate action across Europe.

https://interregeurope.eu/disco

Linkedin: DISCO Project

Energikontor Norr

Green Hub Denmark

House of Energy

Dolny Śląsk

Botoșani Municipality

provincie Drenthe

Codema Dublin's Energy Agency

Περιφέρεια Κρήτης Region of Crete

IRENA

City of Zrenjanin

Aalborg Municipality, DE

Aalborg Municipality is a local authority in Northern Denmark with strong green ambitions, recognized both nationally and internationally. Within its structure lies Green Hub Denmark, a public-private partnership that supports the development and scaling of innovative green solutions by fostering collaboration between both public and private actors.

Aalborg Municipality's participation in DISCO provides an international platform to strengthen the regional green transition. We aim to unlock untapped potential in surplus heat and support the security of green energy supply across the municipality.

Our contribution focuses on sharing policy experience and knowledge, engaging stakeholders, and participating in interregional learning on regulatory frameworks. We bring insights from a well-established DHC system and existing industrial symbioses, and aim to improve local conditions for the reuse of surplus heat.

We expect to gain policy insights and good practices from across Europe that can help us address regulatory and financial barriers hindering the reuse of surplus heat – ultimately supporting new projects and partnerships for a more resilient, low-emission energy system in Aalborg.

Botoșani Municipality, RO

Botoșani Municipality plays the role of the key public institution for local public administration, in the city of Botoșani, Northeast of Romania. The Mayor of Botosani signed the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy confirming the importance of this topic for the city as it strives to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2040 and adapt to climate change. In this capacity, Botosani launched its Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan/ SECAP.

Joining the DISCO provides an excellent opportunity for Botoșani to improve and find innovative energy efficiency policies & solutions to decarbonise heating and cooling for buildings. Botoșani will actively participate in all project activities; developing a policy improvement workplan, contributing to thematic events, good practice register, study visits, mentoring and individual project management tasks.

DISCO will improve regional development policies addressing the energy efficiency specific objective. Botoșani aims to build on its local engagement activity to develop and implement a smart energy efficiency strategy, focused on the needs and priorities of the city.

City of Zrenjanin, RS

The City of Zrenjanin is a local government authority located in northern Serbia, with a population of around 110,000. As the administrative, economic, and cultural center of the Central Banat District, the city is actively involved in initiatives aimed at improving public services, sustainable energy use, and environmental protection. The city has been operating a district heating system since the 1970s and is currently seeking to modernize it and align with EU energy and climate goals.

Zrenjanin joined the DISCO project to improve its local heating and cooling policies by learning from international best practices and by addressing the challenges of transitioning from fossil-based to more sustainable and low-carbon solutions. Through the project, the city intends to explore new opportunities for the integration of renewable energy and waste heat into its district heating system, and to develop practical policy improvements based on stakeholder involvement.

The City of Zrenjanin contributes to the DISCO project by actively participating in all work packages, sharing local experience and needs, collecting relevant data for waste heat mapping, and testing the interregional policy learning methodology. The city also coordinates with national stakeholders to align project activities with broader energy planning frameworks.

CODEMA - Dublin's Energy Agency, IE

Codema is Dublin's Energy Agency and aims to improve the lives of people in Dublin by changing how we produce and use energy locally, for the better. We are a not-for-profit company and work on behalf of our local authority members to promote public good in the areas of energy and climate mitigation.

Codema is part of the DISCO project as it is aligned to our work in accelerating the low-carbon transition through energy planning, district heating, EU projects,behavioural campaigns and local-level climate action,backed by strong European partnerships.

Codema contributes to the DISCO project by bringing our knowledge and expertise in district heating, energy planning and policy and stakeholder engagement.

The DISCO project helps build heat planning capacity in Irish local authorities, promotes district heating beyond Dublin and enables adoption of EU best practices for waste heat use and integration into heat networks - key to heat decarbonisation. The DISCO project offers Ireland a significant opportunity to build capacity for heat planning within local authorities while also promoting district heating and waste heat utilisation outside of Dublin. Heat decarbonisation is a critical challenge in Ireland and some EU countries are far more advanced in district heating and the use of waste heat. This project presents an excellent chance to implement best practices concerning waste heat utilisation and its integration into heat networks.

IRENA - Istrian Regional Energy Agency, HR

IRENA – Istrian Regional Energy Agency is a non-profit organization established in 2009 by the Istrian Region. Its primary mission is to provide expert support and advisory services to both public and private stakeholders in the fields of energy efficiency, renewable energy sources and environmental protection. Over the years, IRENA has been actively involved in numerous national and international projects aimed at supporting the region's transition toward a low-carbon and sustainable future.

IRENA has joined the DISCO project to gain insights into innovative district heating and cooling (DHC) solutions and to collaborate with partners across Europe who have experience in implementing such systems. Since the Istrian Region currently does not have any operational DHC networks, but shows growing interest in introducing small-scale district heating systems, the project offers a valuable opportunity to explore best practices, learn from successful case studies and adapt proven solutions to the regional context.

Within the DISCO project, IRENA is specifically responsible for organizing Peer Review 1, a key activity that will bring together experts and stakeholders to exchange knowledge, assess local potentials and provide recommendations for future development of DHC systems in Istria.

Through this project, we expect to increase our understanding of the technical and financial feasibility of using waste heat in DHC systems, establish a strong network of professional contacts and revise our regional policy instruments to create a supportive framework for implementing DHC projects in the near futurewhich presents a crucial step in our region's energy transition and climate goals.

House of Energy e.V., DE

The House of Energy is a non-profit association located in Kassel. It is an innovation cluster, think tank and network. It cooperates with municipal energy suppliers, industrial infrastructure operators, producers of energy-efficient systems, universities, and financial institutions.

The House of Energy supports the energy transition in Hesse and beyond, as this topic does not stop at state borders. It fosters international cooperation by sharing innovations from Hesse and bringing new imputs to the region.

The House of Energy brings together different stakeholders, experts and resources from within its network. It uses these for communication and dissemination of project results. As a reliable project partner with experience in Interreg projects, House of Energy will support the project goals and objectives. It acts as an intermediary between Hofgeismar, Hesse and the European consortium. It organises the exchange of knowledge and experience to support Hofgeismar in its pioneering role in climate protection and the heat transition.

Hofgeismar aims to take a pioneering role in municipal climate protection and district heat planning. Cooperation within the DISCO project provides the perfect opportunity to learn from partners how they address certain issues. Hofgeismar is eager to be inspired by best practices and solutions from other regions.

Province of Drenthe, NL

Province of Drenthe is a public government organization that operates between the national and municipal level. Approximately 600 people work at the province, 30 of whom work in the field of energy. Drenthe has approximately 500,000 inhabitants in 12 municipalities.

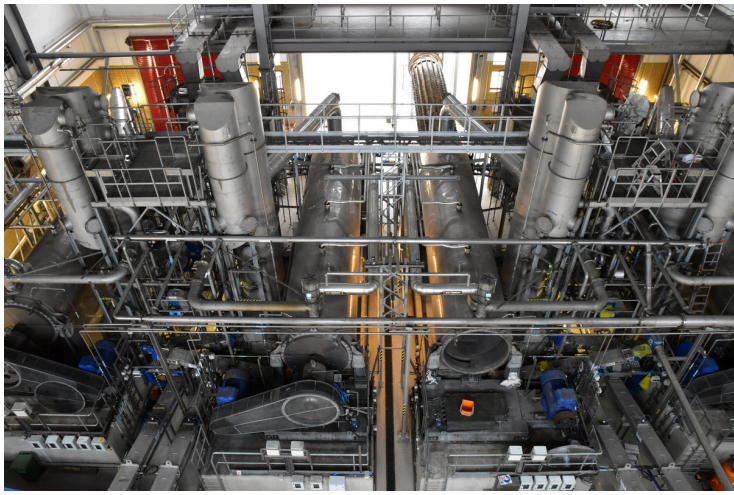
We want to learn how to convince residents that residual heat from a waste incinerator is a useful application. For many residents this is not sustainable, because the production of waste should be avoided. We provide insight into the process of starting this project with multiple municipalities.

We expect to benefit from experiences in other countries regarding residual heat projects and involving residents in these.

The Lower Silesian Voivodeship, PL

The Lower Silesian Voivodeship is a regional government responsible for the Development Strategy for the Lower Silesian Voivodeship, the Energy Strategy for Lower Silesia, and the regional programme Fundusze Europejskie dla Dolnego Śląska 2021–2027 (FEDS), which also includes the Just Transition Fund. It creates conditions and instruments for environmental protection and climate change.

District heating in Poland is advanced but in transition. Poland has one of the largest district heating networks in Europe, serving over 15 million people. However, much of it is outdated and coal-based.



We became a partner of the DISCO project to learn from best practices and support a just heating transition. Owning a policy instrument, we can drive real change and embed project results into regional programmes for long-term, high-impact implementation.

As an outcome of the project, we expect to increase awareness among potential beneficiaries about the possibilities of using waste heat: inspire them with best practices and inform them about possible financing from the FEDS programme. Thanks to this, we hope to increase the number of innovative projects in the region.

North Sweden Energy Agency, SE

North Sweden Energy Agency is an independent expertise resource and a regional cooperation institution without profit interest. Our job is to increase the share of renewable energy and to get companies and public organizations to save energy and natural resources. Our function is simply to contribute to sustainable development, from our location in Norrbotten in the north of Sweden.

Norrbotten has a well-developed district heating infrastructure in its urban areas. The challenge is making use of low-temperature excess and waste heat.

In the DISCO project we want to share local good practices and gain new perspectives from partners who can support the energy transition in Norrbotten. We look forward to contributing as the lead partner, coordinating the consortium and serving as the C&D leader to strengthen outreach and impact.

Region of Crete, EL

The Region of Crete is a regional public authority comprising 40 Directorates, all working in coordination to promote economic, environmental, social, and cultural sustainability and development. With a strong track record in EU-funded projects, Crete has led initiatives across a range of sectors, including energy efficiency, green transition, sustainable tourism, circular economy, and innovation.

Due to the absence of large-scale industries, Crete lacks traditional sources of waste heat typically used for district cooling systems. There is also a notable knowledge gap regarding these technologies. Nonetheless, the DISCO project presents an exciting opportunity and it aligns perfectly with Crete's Crete's vision for a greener future.

Through this initiative, Crete will facilitate the deployment of innovative small-scale district cooling solutions, ideal for tourism-related buildings and other local enterprises.

These cutting-edge systems, coupled with enhanced local expertise, aim to drive widespread adoption across the island—improving energy efficiency, strengthening sustainability and resilience, addressing cooling needs more efficiently, and positioning Crete as a model for sustainable practices. The goal? A cooler, smarter, and more sustainable Crete.

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