1 INTRODUCTORY SESSION AND WELCOME BY THE CHAIR
Francesc Gambús, Member of the European Parliament

Mr Francesc Gambús, MEP, welcomed those present and said he was delighted to be chairing the final meeting of the ELIH-Med project; it was an opportunity for him to meet up again with people with whom he had been working for a long time.

He thanked the partners for the work they had done in their respective countries and said the ELIH-Med project had been a success.

ELIH-Med is a project under the MED Programme, one of the European Union’s transnational cooperation programmes, the purpose of which is to foster territorial cooperation in the framework of the EU’s Cohesion Policy.

Mr Gambús gave a presentation of the ELIH-Med project, which aimed to improve energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption by retrofitting low-income housing units, targeting vulnerable sections of the population.

Aiming to achieve the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy, the project brings together partners from seven EU Mediterranean countries. They have worked together on improving energy efficiency in low-income housing, with a view to strengthening the competitiveness, cooperation and sustainable development of the Mediterranean region.

The partners used innovative technical and financial approaches to reduce energy consumption. The concept of social housing varies from one country to another, but the target groups corresponded to three similar profiles: low-income home owners, households suffering from energy poverty, and social housing tenants. These groups often live in buildings with an inefficient energy performance and they have limited access to credit.

Mr Gambús underlined the importance of both the energy and the social dimensions of the ELIH-Med project. Increasing energy poverty is one of the consequences of the economic crisis and affects more than 50 million people in Europe, i.e. 10% of the population.

Energy poverty not only results in poor living conditions and social exclusion, but also has a negative effect on the health of the most vulnerable sections of the population, especially children and the elderly. Moreover, the opening up of markets has not resulted in a reduction in energy prices, and there is no definition or any indicator of energy poverty at the level of the European Union, neither is there any European policy dealing specifically with this issue.

Some Member States have, however, developed aid mechanisms for vulnerable sections of the population.

Mr Gambús said that the incidence and evolution of rates of energy poverty were determined by three factors: energy prices, the energy efficiency of buildings, and household incomes. Energy prices and household incomes played an important role in energy poverty, but the energy efficiency of buildings remained an essential structural factor.

He stated that the only solution for eradicating energy poverty, in the short term as well as in the long term, was energy retrofitting of buildings. This would also create jobs and increase household income.

Mr Gambús pointed out that the summit meeting of Heads of State on 23 and 24 October 2014 had provided a new framework for energy policy for the 2020-2030 period concerning emissions,
renewable energy and energy efficiency, as well as a voluntary target for interconnections. The Council had endorsed a binding target of a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of at least 40% by 2030 compared to 1990. Energy efficiency is a key factor in achieving the targets set by the European Union for cutting CO2 emissions, and reducing energy consumption and energy wastage. By improving efficiency, the various stakeholders would contribute to improving competitiveness and energy security and to fulfil the commitments of the Kyoto Protocol on climate change.

He concluded by underlining that, although some people claimed that Brussels was remote from the citizens of Europe, the EU supported projects like ELIH-Med.

2 ROUND TABLE ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN LOW-INCOME HOUSING IN THE MEDITERRANEAN: LESSONS AND FEEDBACK

Moderated by Anna Moreno, Italian Agency for New Technologies, Energy and the Environment (ENEA)

Anna Moreno thanked Francesc Gambús and opened the first round table discussion by introducing the leaders of the three main work packages: Alejandra Marin Herbert (City of Malaga, ES), Dominique Caccavelli (Scientific and Technical Centre for Building, FR) and Ales Podgornik (Jozef Stefan Institute, SI).

Ms Moreno asked Ms Marin Herbert, technical advisor, how ELIH-Med’s awareness-raising actions targeting the vulnerable sections of the population had been organised.

Ms Marin Herbert said that energy efficiency did not appear, at the start of the project, to be a priority for the target groups. The project workers also had to take account of the diversity within these groups which, as shown in the exhibition on display here, included the elderly, students, and people who are socially excluded.

She gave details of the different approaches adopted: visiting the elderly in their homes, using new technologies for students, involving local people in awareness-raising campaigns through graffiti projects and workshops, and direct contact with the beneficiaries – these solutions were chosen in Malaga in particular.

Ms Moreno thanked Ms Marin Herbert and asked Dominique Caccavelli, engineer, whether the priority aim of retrofit measures was to reduce energy consumption or to improve the well-being of the target group.

Mr Caccavelli explained that, paradoxically, the outcome was not so much a saving of energy as a definite and constant improvement in the living conditions and comfort of the residents. This
unexpected but tangible and conclusive outcome of the ELIH-Med project meant that the priority, for people living in energy poverty and especially for an elderly population particularly vulnerable to changes in temperature, was in fact thermal comfort.

He explained that on the whole the solutions implemented were the usual ones: insulation of the buildings, façades and roofs, ventilation, in particular natural or cross-ventilation, and the installation of solar shading systems, all of which significantly improved thermal comfort.

**Ms Moreno thanked Mr Caccavelli for his clear explanations, and asked Ales Podgornik, consultant, whether the installation of smart electricity meters would achieve the targets set.**

**Mr Podgornik** said that a number of problems had been encountered with the public services which propose and install the meters. He explained that, for the residents, the most important aspect was not the installation of the meters as such, but the additional information they provided each month, i.e. precise data about the energy consumption of each appliance. The tenants interviewed had welcomed the information about energy costs, which they had been able to observe and as a result modify their habits.

The impact of the smart meters had been positively reinforced by the additional interventions of the project partners. The project beneficiaries had been able to observe the effects of the energy efficiency measures and control their consumption in real time.

He gave the example of a tenant who had two electrical appliances and who was able to see how the older model used much more energy and therefore decided to stop using it. **This kind of reaction to the data supplied had not been envisaged at the start of the experiment.**

**Ms Moreno gave the floor to the other members of the panel before taking questions from the audience.**

She asked **Savvas Vlachos** (Cyprus Energy Agency, CY), **Giuseppe Desogus** (University of Cagliari, IT), **Pantelis Mpotsaris** (Democritus University of Thrace, GR) and **Bartolomeo Sciammaninica** (Municipality of Frattamaggiore, IT) to talk about the activities organised in their countries.

She introduced **Savvas Vlachos**, consultant to the Cyprus Energy Agency, who had closely monitored the interventions in Cyprus.

Mr Vlachos stated that over and above the renovation of 25 buildings, they had succeeded in involving local authorities, the government, several government departments, the electricity provider and a number of private companies working in the renewable energies sector, who had contributed a total of EUR 120,000.

A smart metering system had been installed and a net billing method introduced. The project would now be extended by the government authorities to several thousand buildings targeting low-income households. **Mr Vlachos explained that the government authorities had drafted a new project for the renovation of low-income housing, which would be funded thanks to the package of measures of the ELIH-Med pilot project.**

Ms Moreno thanked Mr Vlachos and all the project partners for the outcomes achieved. She added that other resources also existed to respond to the needs of the target groups.
She then gave the floor to Giuseppe Desogus, professor at the University of Cagliari (IT) who had monitored the project activities in the rural areas in Sardinia. She asked him to describe the particularities of the pilot project in Sardinia.

Mr Desogus explained that the particularity of the project lay in its rural context. The challenge was to renovate low-income housing essentially occupied by agricultural workers, whose energy profile was also very specific given that they heated their homes mainly through wood fires. This meant it was very difficult to make a prior estimate of energy consumption or to assess the impact of the project in advance.

Mr Desogus said there had also been problems between landlords and tenants relating to the maintenance contracts. All these factors had had to be taken into account in assessing energy efficiency.

He explained that the project workers had mainly worked with the residents. They had attempted to solve the technical problems (leaks, stability of the buildings) by using local materials obtained from local suppliers. For the insulation, the technicians used sheep’s wool obtained from Sardinian sheep farmers. The windows were made by a local firm. The project workers were very satisfied with the technical results.

Mr Desogus underlined the close involvement of the tenants in the project and also the improvement in the residents’ comfort and living conditions, which were very gratifying for all those involved in the project.

Ms Moreno introduced Pantelis Mpotsaris, Vice-rector of the Democritus University of Thrace, in Greece, where the project had focused on student residences. She asked him how the project had been monitored, what the outcomes were and what renovations had been completed.

Mr Mpotsaris explained that because the Greek partner had joined the project at a late stage their first challenge was to comply with the deadlines and fall in line with the other partners. The project involved renovating student residences; the target group – students – was atypical; and the third hurdle they had to overcome was the slowness of administrative procedures.

Mr Mpotsaris stated that 130,000 square metres had been renovated, lighting improved, meters installed to measure energy consumption, etc. These actions had been possible thanks in particular to the university staff and partners from the Region of Thrace and Macedonia.

The key point of interest of the project was the interaction with the students, who had contributed to its success.

The main lesson from the project was that when best practices are followed, the target group can disseminate the idea to the wider community.

He thanked all the partners and said that the investment made in the university halls of residence should have paid for itself in about ten years’ time.

Ms Moreno then introduced Bartolomeo Sciannimanica, engineer, and asked him about the outcomes of the ELIH-Med project aside from the renovation of the apartments – whether there had been a change of thinking within the municipality and whether progress had been made with regard to the implementation of the EU Directive on the energy performance of buildings.
Mr Sciannimanica explained that the most interesting aspect of the Frattamaggiore project was the increasing attention paid by the residents to energy efficiency. Frattamaggiore was one of the largest of the ELIH-Med ‘programmes’ and enabled the activities to be monitored so that they could be reproduced and implemented at the level of the European Union.

The main objective was an economic one, since there was a need to ensure that these ‘programmes’ were financially viable. The second objective was to improve residents’ quality of life.

The lesson to be learned for the future was that the energy performance of buildings is important because it influences people’s quality of life and living conditions.

Mr Sciannimanica also pointed out that, following the earthquake in Campania in 1980, many people had been re-housed in social housing and today said they were very happy in their homes. He hoped the project would be a springboard for other similar projects.

He underlined the importance of town planning, which has a real impact on the quality of buildings and, as a result, on quality of life. If we want to build sustainable cities, we need to take account of the constraints and work with local entrepreneurs. It is not just a matter of providing support, but also of taking account of the proposals made with a view to building the cities of the future across Europe.

3 FEEDBACK FROM RESIDENTS

Ms Moreno introduced Georgios Beslemes and Dimitra Kagioglou, students from the University of Thrace.

She asked them what they thought the positive outcomes of the project were, and whether it had given them a better understanding of energy efficiency measures and enabled them to share their knowledge with the rest of their community and with their families.

Mr Beslemes said that the buildings were noticeably more comfortable, that the temperature of the rooms was pleasant, that hot water was no longer a rare resource and that, what was more, energy consumption had been reduced.

Ms Kagioglou said that students had noticed an improvement and were very satisfied. In addition the students had taken part in actions to improve energy efficiency (replacing light bulbs, recycling, etc.) and in awareness-raising campaigns aimed at the public. She welcomed the fact that the students who would come after them would benefit from these improvements.

Ms Moreno said she hoped that the European Union’s target would be reached by 2030, with the help of the new generations.

She introduced Gavino Pinna, a resident who took part in the project carried out in Guardia Grande, in Sardinia. She asked what differences he had noticed in the situation before and after the refurbishment and whether he had noticed any effect on his electricity bill.

Mr Pinna said that the project was a 100% success, because the refurbishment had significantly improved the situation. He joked that he used to wear pyjamas in bed but that now he could sleep with nothing on!
Ms Moreno took questions from the floor.

**Question addressed to Mr Gambús** as Member of the European Parliament and of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy:

Europe is the continent where energy prices are highest, in particular electricity in the remote regions and especially the islands. What should be envisaged for the future?

**Reply by Mr Gambús:**

The Parliament is looking into this issue right now and working on a proposal for an energy union. This is one of the key elements of the new European Commission, whose Vice-President is tasked with developing this project, which has been supported from the start by some but which has not been deemed a priority by the political sphere and the Member States. Energy and the other topics mentioned will be in the forefront over the next five years, and there should be a fundamental change in energy policy in the EU.

**Question addressed to the partners and residents from the first round table:**

Had any difficulties been encountered in terms of public procurement and compliance with deadlines, and with the implementation in general, and how these had been overcome? Secondly, what was the reaction of other residents when they heard about the project and what improvements had they observed in their own homes?

**Reply by Alejandra Marin Herbert:**

For some of the pilot projects, bids were organised to select the beneficiary residents. In other cases, in Malaga for example, the project was initially intended to concentrate on 60 flats, but had to be modified because when the technical committee arrived to select the 60 flats out of a block of 140, the residents demanded that all the flats be included in the project. Yes, bids had been organised and participants were selected on the basis of different criteria.

**Ms Moreno asked for clarification about any problems encountered in the implementation of the projects.**

**Reply by Dominique Caccavelli:**

Measures to improve living conditions require a high degree of specialisation; it is not possible just to choose the lowest price. One of the projects had several times been brought to a halt because of EU regulations. Another example of a difficulty was with the construction sector association in Naples, which initially did not want to employ project beneficiaries.

There was a certain apathy, or discouragement, at first, but the situation had evolved as the project progressed and those who had decided not to take part regretted their decision. This was also a
motivating factor for the residents, who became closely involved in the project and helped to upgrade the buildings.

**Reply by Ales Podgornik:**

In Slovenia the project involved 25 student residences, and it was extremely difficult to launch a public call for tenders. This was exacerbated by the fact that the original documents concerning each building were unavailable, and it had also been a struggle to overcome the resistance of the relevant authorities, the bureaucratic delays, funding problems, etc. The administrative procedures should be simplified for future projects and the processes of certification of expenditure speeded up.

Nevertheless, in spite of nine months being devoted to administrative procedures alone, the work had on the whole been completed on time.

There had been no problems at all with the residents, the students, he was pleased to say.

Ms Moreno confirmed that administrative procedures and the delivery of authorisations could take up to three years for work that was carried out over only three months. She commented that simply circulating the files from one office to another was not good enough, and that the administrative authorities should be able to speed up the processes.

**Question addressed to the representatives of the Democritus University of Thrace:**

To what extent were the students aware of the fact that the refurbishment had been funded by the EU, and to what extent had this modified their perception of the EU?

**Replies:**

According to Dimitra, the students were informed by means of the posters, training sessions and events. She thought that, in view of the results in the student residences, the students were satisfied and that they tended to have a positive opinion of the EU.

Pantelis Mpotsaris replied that the university was a place where opinions were formed, that such projects enabled students to forge a different image of the European Union, and that they were well aware of the world they lived and worked in.

Sandra Marin Herbert asked Francesc Gambús whether everything possible had been done under this project and what he saw as the next step; how policy could be changed.

Mr Gambús replied that the fact that this meeting was taking place in the European Parliament was a first sign of a change in policy. It was important to support this kind of project, not necessarily through funding but, for example, by exchanging good administrative practice and sharing the outcomes. He offered to participate in the drafting of a policy and underlined the importance of exploiting the achievements and the lessons learned from projects, so that they were really useful and made a contribution to our overall experience.

Ms Moreno said that the project leaders had the impression that it was fairly easy, in general, to go from the European level down to the local level, but that the reverse was more complicated. Obstacles appeared, sometimes for political reasons. She also asked the European Commission to give advice about how everyone could benefit fully from the outcomes. She explained that the housing units had been selected, the processes checked, an awareness-raising campaign organised, and that the knowledge and the outcomes needed to be shared.

Mr Gambús took good note of these comments.

**Question addressed to Alejandra Marin Herbert:**
Had the communication and awareness-raising activities also had an impact on residents in housing that was outside the scope of the ELIH-Med project? Had she noted any effects outside the limited area covered by the project?

Reply:
Thanks to the methodology used in the campaigns, these had had an impact not only on the residents but Europe-wide. ELIH-Med had received an award from Eurocities, originally for the pilot project in Malaga, but all the members of the network have recognised that the reality is the same for everyone.

Question addressed to Guiseppe Desogus:
Where did the technicians obtain the sheep’s wool for the insulation, and what is the link between refurbishment of the housing and the development of economic activities?

Reply:
Rather than sheep’s wool, it is what’s left over after the sheep have been sheared that can be recuperated by the construction sector. It was not easy to engage the company that specialises in this activity. It is an independent, flourishing and very dynamic company, but with this project it nonetheless benefited from the promotion of this type of material and from a certain amount of publicity concerning its know-how.

Question:
How can the message be passed on to future students who were not there when the work was done and who may not be aware of the improvements made?

Reply by Pantelis Mpotsaris:
Given the duration of their studies, the students already living in the residences mix with the new arrivals, so the message is easily passed on. There is a public website with all the information about the project, where people can find out more about the work carried out, the improvements made and the energy consumption of the buildings.

Ms Moreno concluded the round table session and invited participants to look at the project exhibition during the break.
5 ROUND TABLE ON THE CHALLENGES FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN MEDITERRANEAN BUILDINGS: POLICY PROPOSALS AND COMMITMENTS FROM THE ELIH-MED & MARIE PROJECTS

Moderated by Patrick Crézé, Agency for Sustainable Mediterranean Cities and Territories (AVITEM)

Mr Crézé introduced the round table participants, Vicente Rodríguez Sáez (DG Regio), Nicolas Espitalier (MED programme secretariat), Marie Donnelly (Director, DG Energy), Antonio Pascale (Frattamaggiore council), Carles Sala i Roca (representing the MARIE project and the Generalitat de Catalunya), Javier Pomares Fuerte (Malaga council), responsible for social affairs, planning and housing, Kyriakos Chatzitofi (Mayor of Agios Athanasios, also representing the Union of Cypriot Municipalities) and Davide Strangis (Executive Secretary of the Intermediterranean Commission of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions), one of the organisers of this debate and of this meeting.

Mr Crézé summarised the aims of the ELIH-Med project, and its different phases, tools, instruments, working methods and partners.

He reminded participants that the guidance document drawn up in coordination with the partners of the MARIE project had set out the specific features of the Mediterranean, linked to climate and sociology, that impacted on energy refurbishing policies. He mentioned a risk of lack of comfort for residents as well as overconsumption.

He called for the social and economic dimensions to be taken into account in designing projects, and for a governance system to be set up that integrated this multi-level, territorial approach.

He asked the local authority representatives to explain how they had integrated this social dimension into their project; how they thought city councils could become involved in energy refurbishing policies, and whether they thought the target section of the population concerned by the energy refurbishment – people on very low incomes – was sufficiently taken into account in EU or national programmes.

Mr Pomares Fuerte, member of Malaga City Council, replied that if the European energy efficiency policy was to be successfully implemented, it needed to be implemented at local level. He said that when people found themselves in difficult situations, the city council was the first place they came in search of a solution. He underlined the importance of the principle of subsidiarity in the delivery of the programme, and then described the project carried out in Malaga to refurbish the Los Limoneros building. He explained that, over and above the increased energy efficiency, economic statistics, and reduction in consumption, the positive outcome was the improvement in the residents’ living conditions, achieved in a manner which respected individuals and the community, with its specific features.
He underlined the importance of the local dimension and of taking the final beneficiaries into consideration in order to obtain results and a genuine awareness of the issues, as well as involvement of all the stakeholders.

Mr Crézé thanked Mr Pomares Fuerte, and commented that it was rare in other European countries to find planning, housing and social affairs brought together in the same function. He then asked the mayor of Agios Athanasios to comment on the implementation of the project in Cyprus.

Kyriakos Chatzitofí thanked all those involved in the project. He explained that the outcomes would be used for the benefit of Cypriot society as a whole. He too emphasised the fact that low-income households should be at the centre of any intervention.

In his opinion, the value of the ELIH-Med project lay in the integration of the pilot initiatives into EU policies, with a view to helping the most vulnerable sections of the population.

He explained that the investment would soon pay for itself, thanks to the reduction in energy expenditure, and that the government had decided on the basis of the lessons learned from the project to integrate the positive points into its policy programmes.

He said that energy efficiency was of prime importance for a continent where energy costs were the highest in the world, a factor which heavily penalised the most vulnerable sections of the population as well as the States.

This was a project that had had an extremely positive impact on the daily life of ordinary people.

Mr Crézé asked whether there was a plan to include the intentions of the municipalities.

Mr Chatzitofí replied that the choices had been made at local level by the people themselves, through an agency which had selected the local authorities to be involved in the pilot project. At the end of the project, the energy regulatory authority in Cyprus had made law a programme of grants for the installation of photovoltaic panels. This was another positive outcome of the project, over and above the actual interventions.

Mr Crézé then asked Antonio Pascale for his point of view on the social dimension of ELIH-Med, on the role of the city council in drafting and implementing a policy of energy refurbishment, and on the funding for the implementation of this policy.

Mr Pascale replied that the project was limited to 18 social housing units, occupied by low-income households living in a situation of social insecurity and energy poverty. The refurbishment project had made a considerable improvement to the living conditions of the residents, who were very satisfied with the results.

He mentioned the obstacles encountered, which included bureaucracy, slow procedures, difficulties in accessing local and EU financing, as well as chronic fraud and misappropriation of funds, the latter having been overcome through the employment of unemployed residents to carry out part of the work.

Mr Crézé asked Mr Pomares Fuerte whether he thought low-income households were sufficiently taken into account in the energy refurbishment strategies promoted by regional, national and EU stakeholders.

Mr Pomares Fuerte replied that the outcome of the project was that the beneficiaries were now better able to control their energy consumption than the general population. It was therefore
absolutely essential, in order for European citizens to take responsibility for their energy consumption, to invest in education, prevention and information, placing the target groups at the heart of any initiatives.

Mr Chatzitofi reminded Mr Gambús that vulnerable sections of the population were a priority, and that in order to achieve results it was first necessary to convince the residents, then the decision-makers, and that these projects needed to be supported.

Mr Pascale explained that the selection of the 18 beneficiary housing units in Frattamaggiore had raised questions of conscience and that, in view of the results, people were calling for the interventions to be renewed.

Mr Crézé asked Marie Donnelly, representing the European Commission’s directorate general for energy, how the Commission could help the Mediterranean regions to reach the target of a 20% reduction in energy consumption. He also asked whether she thought the proposed tools enabled sufficient funds to be allocated to the low-income households.

Ms Donnelly pointed out that the difficulties faced in reaching the 2020 energy efficiency targets concerned all States and not only those in the Mediterranean. She explained that the outcomes of ELIH-Med were very encouraging because they were a motivation for all stakeholders. More than 50% of energy is used for heating and cooling homes, and this is a real problem. It was therefore right to put consumers at the heart of the system, to make them aware of their energy expenditure, show them how to control it, and give them the means to do so by, for example, installing smart metering, introducing time-based pricing, and encouraging people to produce and consume their own energy – a rapidly growing trend in the north of Europe.

Lastly she said consideration should be given to energy efficiency requirements at the design stage of town planning and building projects.

Mr Crézé said that European policies on energy efficiency appeared to take greater account of the needs of the northern European countries than those of the south, in other words heating rather than cooling/air conditioning. He asked Ms Donnelly whether she thought the funding available took sufficient account of the question of air conditioning.

Marie Donnelly replied that the problem of cooling/air conditioning should be addressed at the building design stage and that it was not the local authorities’ problem. She refuted the suggestion that DG Energy was more concerned about heating than air conditioning and recalled that the aim was to reduce energy consumption by improving buildings, then to respond to needs by using renewable energy sources. In this area, the south of Europe had an advantage over the north of the continent.

Mr Crézé asked Vicente Rodríguez Sáez, representing the European Commission’s directorate general for regional and urban policy, what the results were of the policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and cut energy consumption, whether the EU planned to extend this policy in the 2014-2020 period, and how funding for competitiveness or the territorial cooperation funds could help to implement it.
Mr Rodríguez Sáez explained that, with a view to achieving the objectives of the policy supported by DG Regio, the private sector had been invited to become involved. This had proved fruitful, and private sector participation was now one of the pillars of the programme. The successes, lessons learned and best practice should inform future regional policy programmes. The next MED programme would take account of the differences between the north and the south, the east and west, and the needs of vulnerable sections of the population. He gave an assurance that the Commission would in the future back this type of project and continue to provide funding.

Mr Crézé asked Mr Rodríguez Sáez whether DG Regio could influence the conception of multi-level strategies, and whether it could not suggest to the regions that they draft energy efficiency strategies.

Mr Rodríguez Sáez said that DG Regio wanted every region to try to define its own priorities and the strong points that would enable it to specialise. Energy efficiency would be one of the priority questions to take into consideration, but multi-level governance and the principle of subsidiarity were also essential elements, along with simplification of procedures, in improving the daily life of Europe’s citizens. The ELIH-Med project had taken this component into account, he said, and the interventions would not stop with the end of the project.

Mr Crézé asked Nicolas Espitalier, representing the MED programme, to briefly explain how these recommendations would be integrated into future programmes.

Mr Espitalier said that the MED programme had provided the framework for three projects on energy efficiency: ELIH-Med, MARIE and PROFORBIOMED, considered as strategic for the Mediterranean. ELIH-Med was an ambitious programme that had been supported by all the partners because it also addressed the issue of energy poverty.

He welcomed the project outcomes and applauded the collaboration which had resulted in the Ljubljana Declaration and the taking into account of the Mediterranean’s specific features in the EU agenda, as well as the inclusion in the new MED programme of a specific objective on energy efficiency of public buildings.

He said that the ELIH-Med project itself would probably not be renewed, but that many of the actions could be integrated into existing policies. The next MED programme will include projects on renewable energies and urban mobility, innovation, with particular emphasis on green growth, energy efficiency, etc.

Pending assessment and approval by the Commission, the first call for proposals could be launched in September 2015.

Mr Crézé asked Davide Strangis how things could be taken forward, following the Ljubljana Declaration.

Mr Strangis replied that CPMR was determined to act on the commitments made in the Declaration resulting from the joint capitalisation of the MARIE-ELIHMED-PROFORBIOMED projects, to boost the development of energy efficiency strategies for buildings at local and regional in the Mediterranean, to be implemented within a multi-level model of governance which should help to improve the
coordination of policies and instruments in the sector. He explained that the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission had formally approved the Declaration in 2014 and that one of its working groups on Energy was currently proposing, under the impetus of Catalunya, to draft a plan for energy renovation of buildings in the Mediterranean. This would be carried out in collaboration with regional authorities and other public and private sector stakeholders (municipal institutions and networks, energy clusters, Energy Institutes, among others). The plan would look at different key priority actions, currently being defined, aiming to bring about improvements at the level of the market (meeting of public demand and private supply), pilot and strategic projects at transnational level, and on the territories with a leverage effect on private funding as well as effective coordination between regional strategies and the national and European levels through the creation and sharing of efficient public-private partnership arrangements.

He also spoke about ways of promoting the interoperability of regional information systems and monitoring systems, the need for coordinated campaigns to raise people’s awareness, capacity-building in the sector, and the need to adapt interventions and technologies to the local and regional conditions in the Mediterranean.

Mr Strangis explained that these efforts also aimed to improve synergy between the territorial cooperation funding available through the MED programme, the operational plans of the European Structural and Investment Funds and other funds that concerned the Mediterranean region including programmes such as Horizon 2020 which dealt, for example, with aspects relating to research and capacity-building in the energy efficiency sector.

Mr Crézé asked Carles Sala i Roca, who had taken part in the MARIE project and was representing the Generalitat de Catalunya, for his opinion on what action should be taken at regional level, on current trends in the regions, and on best practices in this area, in particular from Catalunya.

Mr Sala i Roca explained that energy efficiency was at the heart of urban remodelling policies which involved not only housing but also offices and public buildings, since the administration should set an example to the citizens.

He said that the collaboration between the ELIH-Med and MARIE projects had resulted in the creation of synergies, tools and the Ljubljana Declaration, a guide for multi-level governance aiming to overcome the barriers that prevent the Mediterranean countries from implementing the Energy Efficiency Directive.

In Catalunya, 80 organisations and agencies were working together to draft the strategy to improve energy efficiency, aiming to carry out work on 60% of the buildings in the region, with alternative funding being used to train people working in the sector and to motivate and raise the awareness of the general public.

Mr Sala i Roca said that the investments should not be assessed in terms of return on investment but in terms of the investment paying for itself, which should take account of the reduction in energy bills.

He hoped that other Mediterranean regions would adopt such strategies, increasing the number of potential beneficiaries from 25 to 120 million.

Mr Sala i Roca hoped to obtain the support of the European Commission to develop new programmes for improving energy efficiency.
6 DEBAT

Question from the floor:

A participant asked the representatives of the European Commission why there were no measures, regulations or funding specifically designed for and aimed at the MED regions and low-income households.

Reply:

Ms Donnelly replied that there was in fact an Article requiring Member States to make available public social housing for households with low incomes. In addition, low-income households may receive aids and benefits for renting private accommodation. Member States’ legislation concerning private property differed widely from one country to another, and they had therefore been asked to produce a report on the situation early next year.

Ms Donnelly pointed out that a financial instrument had been set up three years ago for improving the energy efficiency of public buildings and social housing. It was a system of credits rather than grants. If you looked at the Structural Funds, approximately EUR 38 billion had been allocated to sustainability and 28.4 billion to energy.

She underlined the necessary role of the local authorities in constituting consolidated demand before using all the existing instruments in order to satisfy the demand.

Question from the floor:

The participant noted that all the partners encouraged people to take responsibility for controlling energy consumption, and remarked that the final beneficiaries of this process aiming to improve energy efficiency could make use of independent systems of energy production. However, they underlined that in Spain, for example, consumption of energy produced by householders themselves is hindered by the imposition of prohibitively high taxes, a kind of exorbitant toll. Under these conditions, producing your own energy is even more expensive than using the grid network, which is saying something given that electricity prices in Spain are the highest in Europe. The participant mentioned the pressure exerted by the big energy production and distribution companies in this situation, and asked whether there existed, at European level, aid to help users become more autonomous in terms of energy.

Reply:

Ms Donnelly said that this was the case. She explained that DG Energy planned to study the electricity and gas markets. A document currently being drafted recommended giving greater visibility to existing policies in this area and possibly strengthening them. Energy autonomy could be developed or it could remain a niche area. Certain countries supported this trend through regulations. The problem was that the common production and distribution network is financed by the sale of energy, however if energy autonomy increased then sales would fall and no longer be sufficient to finance the maintenance of and access to the networks. The capacity to produce and consume energy produced by your own home was already open to high-income households, but was not very accessible to low-income households. The European Union wished to encourage energy autonomy out of a concern for social equity, but it would also help to achieve energy efficiency targets and objectives relating to security of supply.

Ms Donnelly pointed out that 60% of energy is currently imported. Producing our own energy would help to cut costs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but all the aspects needed to be taken into consideration and the systems studied globally. This was precisely what DG Energy was planning to do.
Question from the floor:

A participant stated that important work had been done in the environmental field during the period 2006-2013, and they hoped that the 2014-2020 period would be one of integration.

Replies:

Mr Sala i Roca replied that regional policies took energy efficiency targets into account, where compatible with respect for the environment, given that over and above the targets, the 2020 strategy concerned both these areas. The aim was to achieve sustainable growth, and all stakeholders were aware that sustainable energy had to comply with environmental regulations. He confirmed that this period would serve to reinforce and to really integrate this trend.

Ms Moreno made the point that while energy consumption was of course a priority, it seemed to her that assessments of energy policies tended to somewhat neglect the social cost. She asked whether, under the next multi-annual financial framework, more initiatives could be planned to measure in each city the cost in energy terms, the environmental cost and the social cost of the policies, in order to define models for intervention in town planning, quality of life and living conditions, and to encourage decision-makers to take action.

She pointed out that the possibility of assessing the various costs, for a given district, and redefining a town plan taking account of the number of housing units, for example, to make the existing buildings more efficient, had been discussed at a previous meeting.

She voiced her concern that these measures might not be included in the Horizon 2020 programme.

Ms Donnelly clarified that one of the previous meetings had discussed indicators in urban areas in general, and said that two initiatives were under way at the Commission, the first of which aimed to develop general indicators concerning smart specialisation and urban projects, associating them with other activities.

She explained that the participants at that meeting had asked whether it would not be possible, for example, to reduce the twelve environmental indicators used to assess green urban areas to a single indicator. She pointed out that bringing together diverse indicators in a general analysis was an arduous task.

She clarified that Horizon 2020 had to adopt a general approach to energy, transport and ethics, and that these three areas had been brought together in order to make the work easier. If the outcomes were positive, the action would be extended to other areas.

Ms Donnelly explained that the Horizon 2020 strategy gave greater visibility to and provided increased financial support for the social and economic consequences of the energy system. She gave an assurance that the partners were aware of the economic impact of the different options, and that there was no ‘one size fits all’ solution. The cities, regions and States were all proud of their specific characteristics and it was not possible to define a ‘one size fits all’ model.

Mr Crézé thanked the round table participants for their contributions and responses. He said what came out of the statements made was that ELIH-Med and MARIE were not an end but a beginning, an invitation to work at the different levels to pursue the action. He gave the floor to Ms Moreno.

Ms Moreno said that this had been a particularly interesting meeting. She also thanked all the partners, speakers, ELIH-Med and the CPMR for organising the event. Thanks to everyone’s hard work we had achieved results and been able to share them.

She invited the audience to watch a video about the work carried out by the project, stressing the testimonials of residents, whose point of view about Europe had changed thanks to the interventions
from which they had benefited and, more importantly, whose living conditions had been significantly improved.

Ms Moreno invited Antonio Pascale, representing Frattamaggiore, Kyriakos Chatzitofi, Mayor of Agios Athanasios, in Cyprus, and Javier Pomares Fuerte, of Malaga City Council, to sign the Ljubljana Declaration, after which the video would be shown.