

Combining local action with community legislation implementation

The example of the “Display” Campaign for the voluntary display of municipal buildings’ energy consumption, water use and CO₂ emissions

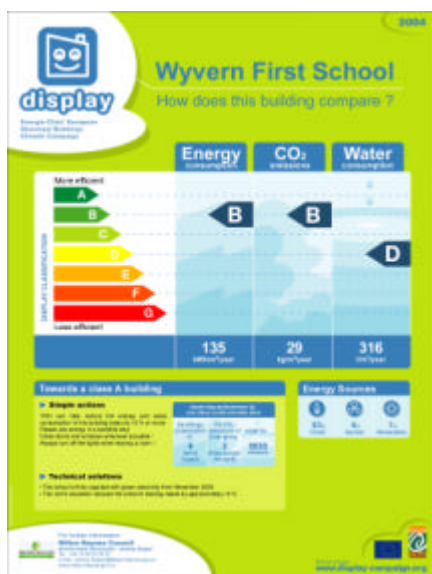
By Gérard Magnin and Peter Schilken, Energie-Cités

The relationship between European level institutions and local authorities is an issue that is often raised and, in particular, the following questions are asked:

- *Is the local level acquainted with Community legislative initiatives?*
- *Is Community legislation suitable for implementation at local level?*
- *Is it possible for widely separated institutional levels to co-operate effectively and provide support to one another?*
- *Is the local level involved only at the very end of the process, when the whole legislative procedure has already been completed, been transposed into national legislation and implemented?*
- *Is local action, because of national and cultural peculiarities involved, really compatible with European-wide initiatives?*

The public part of the Display Campaign launched by Energie-Cités was started in September 2004 and the initiative is set to develop over the next decade. Through this Campaign, we intend to provide pragmatic answers to the above questions, as well as to a few others.

What is Display?



The Display poster

The most visible part of Display is a poster, based on the now well-known principle of energy labels for household electrical appliances and which has been adapted for use on municipal public buildings.

The poster is intended to be displayed in municipal buildings that are open to the public and provides information on the performance of the building in terms of primary energy use, water consumption and CO₂ emissions.

The poster may be produced using an on-line calculation tool that municipal *energy managers* can use to enter data for their buildings.

The Display Campaign www.display-campaign.org invites all interested European municipalities to commit themselves to displaying the performance of their buildings on a voluntary basis.

What is the link between Display and the “Buildings” Directive?

Article 7 of the Directive 2002/91/EC of 16th December 2002 on the energy performance of buildings stipulates that:

*“Member States shall take measures to ensure that for buildings with a total useful floor area over 1,000 m² occupied by public authorities and by institutions providing public services to a large number of persons and therefore frequently visited by these persons **an energy certificate, not older than 10 years, is placed in a prominent place** clearly visible to the public.*

*The range of recommended and **current indoor temperatures** and, when appropriate, **other relevant climatic factors may also be clearly displayed.**”*

The energy certificate is a legal requirement and will have to be displayed to the public. Display is not a certification scheme, but:

- its introduction, on a voluntary basis, will facilitate implementation of the certification process,
- it is more communicative than a single certificate, which may be perceived as being just another administrative requirement to provide information to the public.

These features mean that the introduction of Display can be achieved independently from the schedule set for enforcement of the legal requirements linked to the Directive.

How did the idea of Display come into being?

In its opinion (adopted on 9th October 2001) on the proposal for a Directive on the energy performance of buildings [COM(2001) 226 final 2001/0098 (COD)], Energie-Cités insisted on “*the necessity for those in charge of public buildings to set an example by displaying their own energy performance*” and added:

“However, we consider that to be fully effective, this last measure should be complemented by additional measures aimed at facilitating control by the citizens:

- **a comprehensive CO₂ emissions and energy performance indicator** (by analogy with the classification for household appliances) to give the general public some idea of the performance level of the building (including the part of the demand covered by renewables and cogeneration)
- **an obligation to publish on the Internet** the energy performance of public buildings belonging to public authorities – Community institutions, Member States, local and regional authorities – or privately owned or occupied buildings frequented by the public.”

Energie-Cités suggested that:

- **“without waiting** for the Directive to be passed, **municipalities start to display the energy performance of their buildings** frequented by the general public,
- **the experience of our network be used by the Commission to set up comprehensive and meaningful indicators for the citizens.”**

(the unabridged version of the opinion is available from www.energie-cites.org)



Brainstorming session at a Conference of Energie-Cités

Energie-Cités submitted a project based on this to the European Commission (DG ENV) under the “*Community framework for co-operation to promote sustainable urban development*”. DG ENV is providing financial support for the project in its 30-month pilot phase.

Display helps accelerate the implementation of the “Buildings” Directive



Inge Van De Klundert (Utrecht), presents the testimony of his pilot-city in Martigny (CH), 23rd April 2004

The time required for a Directive to reach the implementation phase, from the conception of the initiative to its coming into effect **is naturally quite long**: preliminary consultation, proposal from the Commission, discussions in Parliament and Council in order to achieve a joint Position, transposition time, transposition acts, implementation time after transposition... plus any possible delays. The entire process may take up to ten years, or even more in some cases.

Unlike many others, the legislative process for the “Buildings Directive” has been relatively swift: the Commission made a proposal in April 2001 and the Directive was published at the OJEC on 4th January 2003. The Directive provides a three-year timeframe (up to January 2006) for achieving transposition, but Member States will allow additional time for the implementation of the measures in their respective countries. The whole process may take three years, if not more, before all the provisions come into effect.

If we add the two-year period that preceded the Commission's proposal, we realise how much time it takes for a Directive to reach the implementation phase: between **one fifth and one quarter of an average working lifetime!** This extended **"top down"** process can be **accelerated by means of parallel and complementary actions**, which are closely linked to the legislation itself and which get the end participants involved by offering them the option of implementing the provisions of the Directive on a voluntary basis, well before it is transposed into national law, and using a **"bottom up"** approach.

This is precisely the objective of "Display", since the idea is to **encourage municipalities to display their consumption and emission performance on a voluntary basis**, for its own sake and because they are an example to the general public and to local players. In this way, they facilitate the implementation of national transposition acts in all EU countries, once these have been adopted.

Display improves quality of implementation of the "Buildings" Directive

As far as demand-side energy is concerned, **the success of a Directive** will depend whether there is a positive reaction from end consumers and from people involved in the building trade: hundreds of millions of Europeans are involved in this way. It is therefore up to each of us as to whether or not legal requirements are put into practice. As for how success is actually to be measured, for some a compulsory administrative certificate (as provided for in the Directive) may be enough, but for others only a **process aimed at producing effective improvements in energy efficiency** of buildings (which is, after all, the spirit of the Directive) will be a sign of success.



Jeremy Draper (Milton Keynes) at the Energy Managers' Conference in Stuttgart, 1-2 July 2004

There is therefore always a risk that the quality of the implementation process may be lower than anticipated, especially when local players, who are to take action *in fine*, have been excluded from the process or contest the objectives or details of the Directive.

Because it aims to implement one of the provisions of the Directive in a scientific yet pragmatic way and because it encourages further improvements through appropriate communication, **Display improves the quality** of the Directive implementation process. Display may also be used by law-makers as a source of inspiration, since details of the implementation will have been tested even before any regulations have been passed.

Display prepares the implementation of the European Commission's thematic strategy on the urban environment

In its **"Sustainable construction" section**, the Commission's proposal published in 2004 aims to:

- *"develop a common methodology for evaluating the overall sustainability of buildings and the built environment, including life-cycle cost indicators"... then "further non-energy-related environmental performance requirements to complement Directive 2002/91 on the energy performance of buildings", including for "the renovation of smaller buildings and general incentives for energy efficiency."*
- *"the Commission will develop the environmental labelling of construction materials (EPDs and/or EU eco-label)".*

By measuring CO₂ emissions and water use in addition to energy consumption, the Display Campaign is in keeping with the above objective and provides the European Commission with an opportunity to accelerate the process of implementation of its proposals at the local level.

Display aims to make energy and climate issues comprehensible to non-specialists

One of the main reasons why attempts at improving energy efficiency have failed so far lies in the **inability of energy specialists to communicate with the rest of the community**.

Energy and climate jargon is often considered to be incomprehensible by non specialists: MWh, Gigajoules, tonne-CO₂ equivalent and other units mean nothing to most people. However, **improving energy efficiency involves taking decisions that must be understandable to people who are not energy specialists** and this accounts for 99% of the population – the general public, elected representatives, building companies, SME managers, housing estate managers, etc.



Don Lack presents the implementation of Display in Leicester, a pilot-city

Following the example of the energy labelling system for household appliances, **Display is an attempt to get out of this dead end** by initiating a dialogue with the general public and by encouraging them to take action.

Amongst the possible accompanying measures, one is worth a mention: the idea is to launch a **Campaign that is specifically aimed at poorly performing buildings** (cat. F & G). By analogy with campaigns for losing weight, such as “Weight Watchers”, we contemplate launching a **“Municipal Energy Watchers” Campaign** aimed at providing improvement advice using simple and pleasant communication tools.

Energy is a “positive” term that is synonymous with movement and pleasure. Attempts at saving energy may be perceived as a deprivation of pleasure, a frustration or even a retreat. **Being able to associate energy saving measures with some form of pleasure by taking action** has become a priority if we want to get the whole population involved, rather than only the most highly motivated. Although frequently mentioned, the changes in behaviour that are required are based on this pre-requisite: **a future with less energy and fewer emissions must not be associated with a gloomy future**. This challenge is even greater in countries who have only recently overcome supply shortage problems.

Display encourages the population to take action

Display is a **dialogue and communication tool** intended for the general public. The Display poster is in fact an interface between the municipality and the population. The poster:

- introduces a new component into municipal information,
- contributes to dissemination of the labelling system into new areas,
- gives a clear signal that the municipality takes energy issues seriously,
- prepares the ground for further initiatives aimed at the general public,
- can be used in schools (first target), which represent an important proportion of the municipal building stock,
- provides citizens and NGOs with a basis for approaching their municipalities if these are not using this system yet.



At Milton Keynes, Display is already in use at the Wyvern school

In addition to the accompanying measures which are promoted by the Display Campaign, Energie-Cités will propose to **municipalities that they take part in a communication and promotion contest**. The idea is to promote the communication and promotion initiatives that municipalities have set up to raise the level of interest amongst their citizens. This is based on the assumption that the vast majority of them are living in a building whose energy efficiency can certainly be improved.

Display promotes the idea of an energy certification system in the housing sector. It also **encourages and facilitates the effective implementation of this** and not only in public buildings.

Display promotes the municipality's in-house initiatives

Display is a calculation tool...

Display provides a tool for calculating:

- the amount of primary energy used,
- corresponding CO₂ emissions,
- energy/water consumption and CO₂ emissions ratios,
- the corresponding performance class (from A to G).

Calculations are made automatically using the data that have been entered on-line by the *energy manager* and integrate into this the primary energy structure for the country involved, since this information is already available in the *software*.

... a monitoring, simulation and benchmarking tool...

Since the system offers the option of entering several years of data for the same building, Display can be used as a **monitoring tool** (although nothing can replace a proper energy management system when it comes to monitoring a stock of municipal buildings).

Display can also be used to compare the energy performance of a building with the performance it would have if improvement works were carried out. This **simulation** tool is of interest because it provides a graphical demonstration of the impact of investment on the energy class (from A to G) the building finds itself in.

It is also possible to **compare** the energy performance of some buildings with the performance of other buildings within the municipal stock or with those in other towns and cities. It is therefore an **incentive to achieve progress at one's own pace**, since the improvement margin is equal to the distance on the scale between the class the building is in and "Class A".

... and a tool for dialogue and communication with elected representatives.

Elected representatives are the expression of the local population and are very rarely energy specialists. For this reason, municipal *energy managers* often need to design an internal marketing strategy in order to sell the idea to elected representatives and convince them of the value of taking decisions which will result in improvements. The Display poster can help *energy managers* deliver the message, for instance by using the simulation tool.

The Display working procedure is truly "European"...



The pilot cities at the beginning of the project, Krakow (PL), 4 April 2003

Display is the result of networking activities between **twenty municipalities from eighteen countries** as represented by their *energy managers*. Collectively, they have created the product and all its various components, under the co-ordination of Energie-Cités: poster, calculation parameters, tests, promotion, etc. Of the municipalities involved, some were more experienced than others, some were from the North, whereas others were from the South, the East or the West of Europe.

Five experts from five countries contributed their skills and experience to the network of municipal specialists. The European Commission's **Environment and Energy & Transport Directorates-General** were constantly involved in the progress of this project, although the conclusions that were drawn are not binding on them as is usually the case when they provide support for projects.

Display was **conceived as a “European” product**, and not as a collection of national products. It is an excellent example of **networking at European level** that DG TREN can use in its Concerted Action with Member States on how to implement the Directive.

... Display can therefore be used everywhere in Europe

From the start, the objective has always been to provide a **product that could be used by all European municipalities**, regardless of its size, location and level of performance. Knowledge of consumption and surface area data are all that are required to join the Display Campaign.

All European countries, whether they be Members of the European Union, candidate countries or otherwise, are eligible to join the Campaign. The information package, as well as the Internet interface, are already available in eight languages (July 2004) and should soon be available in at least 12 languages. It is indeed essential to work and communicate in the languages of the countries involved.

Display is an ideal tool for those **local and regional energy management agencies** who wish to develop initiatives in municipalities or at a regional scale.

The Campaign has a target of promoting the use of Display in more than **1,000 European municipalities** by 2007.



Peter Schilken (Energie-Cités) awarding the “encouragement flower” to each of the pilot cities, Krakow, April 2003

Conclusion: Bringing the gap between Europe and its citizens

At a time when the debate on the **relationship between “Europe” and its citizens** has very much become a topical issue in all European countries, it is vital to develop a series of initiatives that bring players from different levels together around common objectives that are shared by all. What is at stake is the future of Europe.

Display demonstrates that this is possible, and will provide further evidence of this when more than a thousand municipalities have joined the Campaign. How might this be achieved? It is thanks, essentially, to the **networking approach**, which provides a new way of thinking, producing, proposing, building and implementing ideas which is at the same time both political and practical, European and local.

The experience acquired by Energie-Cités over the last fifteen years has been used to serve this ambition through a practical project. Compared with what remains to be done in building a sustainable energy society, it is nothing, or almost nothing. One tentative attempt among many others.

But let's just imagine what would be possible – in all areas – if European and national institutions made better use of the **strength of networks of players** and gave them more encouragement to play their part.

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