

## The creation of a local energy agency for Sighișoara and its surroundings

Romania has 8 energy agencies, a total comprised of one national, one regional and 6 local. For a point of comparison, Bulgaria's total is 14, whereas France has 33 (this includes any type of energy agency). Apart from the national agency, all of the Romanian agencies were established through the European programme "Intelligent Energy Europe" (IEE). This program is at the same time beneficial and binding—it makes the creation of an agency a reality but it is still a challenge to overcome. It was this challenge that the city of Sighișoara wanted to rise to, in engaging in the creation of a local energy agency.

The local energy agency of Sighișoara is located in the heart of the city. It acts within a territory of 100,000 inhabitants that includes Sighișoara and its surroundings, one where the energy issue is a new problem for all players.

### Why create an energy agency in Sighișoara?

The population of the city is still minimally aware of energy issues, and the benefits to which it is entitled for investments in renewable energy or to increase energy efficiency of housing, through programmes 'inciting national and European. Indeed, the municipality has not established communication campaigns, a task that will déléguée to the agency. Moreover, Sighișoara didn't have any structure responsible for the management of energy consumption, nor an energy efficiency plan, which could permit the implementation of a top-down management of energy in the territory.



The clock tower in the citadel of Sighișoara

### What are the objectives pursued by the agency ?

It has three main goals:

Conserve  
the use of energy in  
municipal properties

Promote  
renewable energies in the  
territory

Inform and motivate  
the population on energy  
issues

### Participation in the European project « Intelligent Energy Europe »

It is within the framework of the European programme "Intelligent Energy Europe" (IEE) that Romania's fifth local energy agency is founded in Sighișoara. Officially inaugurated on January 1st, 2008, it has taken nearly four years for this agency to be established.

"The IEE project begins in 2004 and unites the urban community of Greater Nancy (France), which was appointed responsible for the project, the province of Frosinone (Italy), the city of Parma (Italy) and a municipality that neighbors Sighișoara," explains Daniela Oprea, Head of the Planning Department of Sighișoara. "At this point, the city of Sighișoara is not yet associated with the project." But the project was facing difficulties. For administrative reasons, the urban community of Greater Nancy had to withdraw in 2006. The same year, the Romanian municipality must back out for financial reasons.

These unforeseen withdrawals not only delay the project but also put it at risk. To be successfully carried out, another candidate must be found.

"It's actually a meeting between the mayor of the nearby town and one of our deputy mayors that unblocks the situation. The latter is very concerned and soon after manages to convince the city council to take over the project," explains Daniela Oprea.

Sighișoara thus integrates the project.



Les 3 agences de l'énergie partenaires

### A brief overview

#### The Region of Sighișoara

Number of inhabitants :  
100,000

#### The Region of Sighișoara's Energy Agency

Created on :  
January 1st, 2008

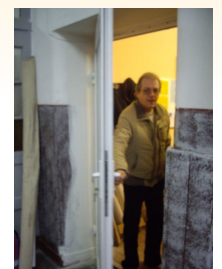
Specializing in:  
energy efficiency in  
buildings

Partners :

The local energy  
agencies of Parma  
(Italy) and of the  
Province of Frosinone  
(Italy)

#### Financially speaking

Initial budget :  
117,000 € of which  
45,000 € is personnel  
fees for the first 3 years  
Financing : European  
programme "Intelligent  
Energy Europe" from  
2008 to 2011 at a rate of  
50%, the Region and  
then the agency itself.



Mihail Ioan Maior, the  
Director of the energy  
agency of Sighișoara



## The process of constructing the agency

Daniela Oprea, head of the planning department of Sighișoara, explains that « *The administrative tasks were very long but the fact that the project was successful justifies all of the effort that went into it* ». And indeed, after more than a year of administrative procedures, in **November 2007**, the agency received approval from the European Commission. At the same time, the municipality also received its confirmation of consequent financial assistance. **Mr. Ivan Maior**, named director of the agency since January 2007, and one of those responsible for its creation, could not conceal his joy on this day.

The agency was officially created on **January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008**.

### How it works

Ivan Maior explains the process of the agency's origination: "*After a year of working alone, I'll be able to establish a small team (up to 6 people, of which two are specialists). All tasks of the agency are planned on a monthly basis, as required by the Commission*". Mr. Maior and his team will prepare an annual report and especially a final report that will permit the European Commission to monitor the evolution of the agency and ensure the achievement of its objectives.

The agency works closely with the city and the Planning Department.

## The specific objectives of the agency

The general aims of the agency emerge as several sub-goals :

Create a **database** of all the existing energy resources.

**Estimate** the use of energy throughout the territory and any potential sources of energy savings.

Draft a strategy on **rationed energy management**.

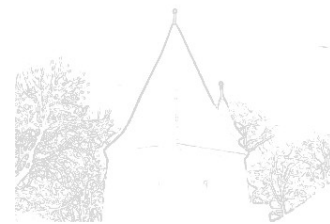
**Encourage** the use of unconventional energy sources.

**Increase public awareness** and **educate** children and adolescent about the importance, and need for, efficient energy usage.

Propose **technical assistance** on energy efficiency for local authorities and NGOs.

**Design and implement projects** for the city to decrease its energy consumption and diversify its energy sources.

The first **communication activities** of the newly created agency focus on welcoming individuals and professionals to the agency.



## The budget

The agency has a budget of **117,000 €** which includes 45,000 € for wages during its first three years of existence. Regarding equipment, a major purchase is planned: "*We are going to acquire an infrared camera (15,000 €) to use in thermal photography of buildings. Its use will be free over the first 3 years for individual residences*", announces Mr. Maior.

## What is the Intelligent Energy Europe (IEE) programme ?

IEE is a European programme that aims to support the creation of local energy agencies under the framework of partnership between several territories. These territories should each establish an agency, and then the agencies are expected to cooperate in their activities. If its file is accepted by the European Commission, an agency will receive funding for 3 years for personnel expenses and some costs of materials. The agency must achieve its objectives and report back to the European Commission by way of formal, annual reports. It must also be self-financing within 5 years (under penalty of having to repay any funding assistance should this condition not be met).

### Advice - viewpoints

« *This is an excellent project, but the implementation procedure is extremely long and requires a great deal of diligence,* » declares Daniela Oprea.

« *The notion of cooperation is very important and the partner agencies, if they are competent in all domains, will specialize equally in domains that are different and complementary. An agency will specialize in a field whose application is characteristic in its geographical area.* » Thereby, Mr. Maior posits, "*in Italy, the two partner agencies are specialized in thermal and photovoltaic solar energy. For our part we are going to make the energy efficiency of buildings our specialty.*"

## For more information...

Website of the city the Sighișoara (romanian):

<http://www.sighisoara.org.ro/>

Website for the energy agency of Sighișoara: *under construction*

Site for Intelligent Energy Europe: <http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/>

Information about IEE on ADEME's site (in French): <http://www2.ademe.fr/>

Articles about Sighișoaras on the ChallenGES Tour blog:

<http://challengestour.blogspot.com/>

## Who to contact from agency in Sighișoara ?

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