

## The island of Lesbos

Lesbos is the third biggest island in Greece, located in the northeast Aegean Sea. The capital town is Mytilini which is also hosting the Region of North Aegean and the General Secretariat for Aegean and Islands Policy. There are about 85.333 people living in Lesbos today. Their main source of income is commerce, especially food production activities, different kinds of services but also agriculture, animal farming and fishing. In the past 20 years the island has experienced significant touristic development; however, it is still considered a calm vacation destination with a short tourism period.

## The starting point

Lesbos is electrically autonomous with a thermal power station operating on the island, using diesel and fuel oil as primary energy source. Also, large amounts of fossil fuels are transferred with ships to the island to cover mainly the demand for transport and heating. Further wind farms and PV stations are installed on the island helping to meet almost 14% of the electricity demand.

During the past few years the need to extend and move the existing thermal station to a new area, away from the town of Mytilini, has caused several disputes among locals in the process of finding an adequate new location.

According to the local iSEAP resulting from the Pact of Islands, the Municipality of Lesbos aims to reduce the island's dependence on energy imports by promoting small and medium scale RES installations to boost local energy production. By 2020, it is expected to cover 17% of the island's primary energy demand through RES.



## Thanks to Smilegov

Smilegov has provided the Municipality of Lesvos with the opportunity to become a member of a broader family of European islands committed to sustainability. The contact with several other, more experienced, island local authorities sharing similar challenges as well as visions offered Lesvos the inspiration and motivation it needed to continue working on its sustainable energy projects and policies at local level by also applying enhanced and innovative processes and methods. From the beginning, Smilegov capacity building activities have supported Lesvos both in identifying ways of overcoming barriers to the realisation of sustainable energy projects and in helping municipal staff develop specific skills in order to implement in an efficient and sustainable way the local iSEAP.

Moreover, Smilegov supported several Greek island authorities to collaborate with each other through the establishment of the Smilegov cluster for Greece. Lesvos approached neighbouring islands, exchanged ideas and experiences and formulated common strategies. People working for or actively supporting the municipality met with their counterparts from other municipalities, worked together and generated new knowledge during the cluster workshops, all while developing friendships founded on their common interests and aspirations for the development of their islands and their role as active citizens.

## This is what we achieved so far

Amidst the escalating financial crisis in Greece Lesvos managed not only to keep the fire of hope for local sustainable development alive but also make significant steps forward. More specifically, Lesvos managed to:

- Actively participate in the capacity building activities hosted by Samsø
- Build more efficient communication with the Regional authorities
- Update the municipality's inventory for electricity consumption
- Gain significant experience on how to develop projects relevant for Lesvos
- Overcome technical and legislative barriers regarding projects on energy efficiency in street lighting, wind farm repowering, geothermal district heating and the promotion of EV charging stations

## Future hopes and expectations

Lesvos is committed to remaining active in the fight against climate change, using locally available renewable resources to cover the island's energy demand. More specifically, in the coming months, provided that the banking system becomes more stable, a pipeline of projects for energy production and energy efficiency will be implemented capitalizing in this way the valuable support received from Smilegov.