Energy Communities as a tool for alleviating energy poverty

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Dimitris Tsekeris – Friends of the Earth Europe
Climate Justice & Energy Campaigner
European Community Power Coalition coordinator
Who is who

- Dimitris Tsekeris
  - Climate Justice & Energy Campaigner (FoEE) / Coordinator of European Community Power Coalition
  - Mechanical engineer / Sustainable energy
  - Get in touch for climate justice!
    dimitris.tsekeris@foeeurope.org
    @TsekerisDim
The European Community Power Coalition

- Promotion of the development of citizen and community ownership.
- Diverse network of 50+ like-minded organisations across Europe
- Energy cooperatives, cities and local authorities, the renewable energy industry, legal experts & NGOs
- Website: https://communitypowercoalition.eu/
What we do...

1. Advocacy work
2. Communication
3. Capacity Building
Activities

Put citizens and communities at the heart of the RePowerEU strategy - Letter

European Community Power Coalition urges EU to drop gas and nuclear from Taxonomy - Statement

Change state aid to support community energy - letter

Transposition Tracker Tool

What legal support are different EU countries giving to community energy?

This tool tracks how EU governments are putting the policies in place under the EU's clean energy laws that should support community energy. We refer to two main Directives: the Renewable Energy Directive (RED2) and the Internal Electricity Market Directive (IDMD).

Do you have more information about the situation in your country? Contact us.

FINANCING COMMUNITY ENERGY
PUTTING LOCAL ENERGY TRANSITION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AT THE HEART OF THE GREEN RECOVERY
A POSITION PAPER FROM THE COMMUNITY POWER COALITION

Community power is part of the solution at COP26

As climate negotiations continue in Glasgow, community power proponents are demanding EU leaders unlock the enormous potential of community energy.
Community Energy Guidebook

A handbook filled with practical tips and wisdom from projects all across Europe

- 160 pages
- 26 chapters
- 22 inspiring success stories
- Over 80 links to additional resources

Community Energy Guidebook available now in more than 7 languages (English, Czech, French, Portuguese, Greek, Polish and Spanish) – More to come
Across Europe, 86% of people questioned said they would support new wind and solar projects near to where they live. They also expressed a strong interest in joining a local energy cooperative and supported government measures to accelerate the rollout of wind and solar power.

This is in a nutshell what is revealed in a recent poll conducted in 10 European countries (United Kingdom, France, Germany, Spain, Poland, Italy, Czech Republic, Greece, Romania and Bulgaria) to better understand the public support for wind and solar.
Challenges

How to ensure a just and accelerated transition?
Energy communities are part of the solution

WHY ARE ENERGY COMMUNITIES CENTRAL TO ACHIEVING THE EU’S CLIMATE AMBITIONS?

- The EU needs to rapidly accelerate its decarbonisation efforts
- Renewable energy projects are a central part of these efforts
- And yet, citizen opposition to renewable energy exists and risks derailing the EU’s efforts
- Energy communities and citizen engagement are therefore necessary to achieving the EU’s climate ambitions

Enabling framework
Access to financial capital
- Funding resources
Auctions, bureaucracy
- Grid access
Political signals (beyond fossils, Taxonomy, Gas Package)

Resources, best practice and information sharing
ENERGY COMMUNITIES - THEIR IMPORTANCE TO THE TRANSITION

Historically, energy communities have focused mostly on local renewable energy projects such as wind farms, biogas or biomass projects, or solar PV, as well as community initiatives such as district heating projects. However, new activities supported by new business models and the greater use of smart and digital technologies are re-defining the range of activities and services that energy communities can provide in the near future.

Energy poverty

Even before the energy crisis

1 in 4 European households currently struggle to adequately light, heat or cool their homes and over 1 billion across the world do not have access to energy. No one should ever have to choose between eating, lighting or warming one’s home.

According to the Right2Energy Coalition:

We have identified three essential ways to eradicate energy poverty in Europe:

1. Access to affordable, clean energy as a basic human right
2. Decent, energy-efficient and affordable housing for all
3. Energy democracy – Energy communities participation

Energy poverty derives from a series of policies and regulations that result in an unjust resource allocation and rising inequalities.

It is related to multiple social factors.
Opportunities

Energy communities can significantly contribute to:

- Speed up the energy transition through democratic participation
- Tackle energy poverty – Access to clean, secure and affordable energy
- Maximize local acceptance of RES
- Support local growth through sustainable job creation – Wider benefit allocation
- Energy efficiency – Lowering the energy demand
- Enhance and ensure solidarity and social justice

- Renovations of houses for its members and heat pump roll-out
- Solar roofs – (Collective) self-consumption (energy sharing, net-metering & virtual net-metering)
- Reducing energy bills
RePowerEU: What is it?

Following the war outbreak in Ukraine, the EU moved ahead with a plan for joint European action for more affordable, secure and sustainable energy, named REPowerEU.

The plan seeks to make Europe independent from Russian gas before 2030 by further accelerating the energy transition and increasing the ambition of the Fit-for-55 package.

The Commission’s plan to increase the resilience of the EU-wide energy system is based on two pillars:

1. Diversifying gas supplies, via higher Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and pipeline imports from non-Russian suppliers, and larger volumes of biomethane and renewable hydrogen production and imports;
2. Faster reducing the use of fossil fuels in our homes, buildings, industry, and power system, by boosting energy efficiency, increasing renewables and electrification, and addressing infrastructure bottlenecks.
How to put citizens and communities at the heart of the RePowerEU strategy

RePowerEU strategy should recognize community energy as a key lever. Fostering renewable community energy is a realistic way of moving away from fossil fuels and accelerating the energy transition in a just, participatory and inclusive way, as well as to tackle real social issues such as energy poverty. In order to boost the creation of new energy communities and a just energy transition, we make the following recommendations:

1. Full implementation of the Clean Energy Package (CEP) provisions for energy communities. Prior to adoption of the enabling framework, Member States should carry out assessments in order to map the barriers and potential at national level.

2. Establishment of national and sub-national objectives for citizen and local community ownership and production of renewables in NECPs as well as at regional and local/municipal level and adoption of RES targets to at least 50% by 2030. Lift all bureaucratic barriers for renewables deployment taking into account adequate biodiversity provisions while engaging with local communities. Set specific national and/or regional and local energy community objectives promoting local ownership of renewables.

3. Develop at least one Renewable Energy Community (REC) per local region in order to support citizens to reduce their energy costs and tackle energy poverty through energy sharing, net-metering or virtual net-metering schemes. Access to renewables for all.

4. Provide dedicated funding for technical support to renewable energy communities. In order for barriers to be removed for citizens to effectively participate in energy communities, public schemes should be established to provide them with administrative and technical support. The specific barriers faced by energy poor households should be fully assessed, and addressed in those schemes.

5. Reduce energy demand: The energy efficiency first principle must guide all actions and measures, in particular for vulnerable households, building renovations, massive heat-pump roll-out, and empower consumers, especially in urban environments, where most people live. Reducing demand will also require behavioral change at all levels of society, along with long-term structural changes, which should be encouraged through public policies.

6. Assess current market structures and optimise electricity market design accordingly in order to reflect the actual cost of energy.

7. Windfall profits should be taxed and revenue redirected to renewable, energy efficiency and community energy projects and to support citizens, especially the most vulnerable. Such fiscal measures on high rents could make up to EUR 200 billion available in 2022.

8. Upgrade the grid infrastructure and provide preferential access to community energy initiatives. Alternatively, allocate grid capacity for renewable community energy projects, especially if combined with energy sharing, net-metering or virtual net-metering schemes.

9. Withdrew the EU Taxonomy Complementary Delegated Act which provides green labels to fossil gas and nuclear investments.

10. Do not replicate citizen energy community measures in Gas Market reform proposals.

11. Assess the enormous potential of community energy. Assign the Joint Research Centre (JRC) to conduct a research report regarding the community energy potential for quick decarbonisation of the EU, with 2025 and 2030 as benchmarks.
The global financial system is morally bankrupt.

It favours the rich and punishes the poor.

We need a new architecture that delivers for all, and closes the gap between the financial and the real economies once and for all.
Wrapping up (2/3)

The world’s 10 richest men have doubled their fortunes since the global health emergency began, while the incomes of 99% of humanity are worse off as a result, according to Oxfam. More than 160 million people have also been pushed into poverty, the UK charity estimates.

Now Russia’s war in Ukraine is deepening the gloom. Beyond the battlefield, the conflict has upended commodity markets and global supply chains, driving up prices for energy and food.

NEW all-time weekly high for the atmospheric #CO2 level during the human era! 🌙levant 421.63 ppm in 22nd week of 2022 🌚 Up from 419.53 a year ago 🌚 @NOAA
Wrapping up (3/3)

- Multiple interlinked crises (e.g. climate crisis, inequalities, people fleeing, energy price crisis, financial crisis, inflation, shortage of food, human rights)
- Climate crisis is accelerating with devastating impacts especially to the most vulnerable ones
- Inequalities constantly rising
- Energy crisis and energy poverty as a real threat for middle-class and below – Esp. after the war in Ukraine
- It is time to unleash the immense potential of Community Energy so as to accelerate the energy transition through citizens and municipalities participation that results in:
  - Just and fair transition
  - Increased local acceptance for Renewables
  - Wider benefits allocation
  - Solidarity that leads to system transformation
- We must protect the most vulnerable ones
- We must step-up the political pressure of the wider energy democracy movement

Source: Knoxville Community-Wide Climate Action Plan

Climate & Social Justice
Thank you!

Mobilise! Resist! Transform!

friendsoftheearth.eu