Sustainable Lifestyles for Climate Action and Policies for ALL

UNFCCC SB58 - BONN, GERMANY
SIDE EVENT: INFORSE - FRAUNHOFER - REScoop.eu - SE
Saturday, 10 June, 2023
Time: 14:45-16:00  Room: Berlin
Energy Communities: reducing emissions, promoting a just transition

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Who is REScoop.eu?

- European Federation of Citizen Energy Cooperatives
- Not for profit association
- Based in Belgium
- Founded in 2013
- 1,900+ energy cooperatives
- 1,250+ million EU citizens
What is an energy cooperative?

• Groups of citizens who jointly cooperate on energy transition projects
• Legal entity (many times adopts the cooperative form)
• 7 ICA principles
  • Voluntary and open membership
  • Democratic member control
  • Member economic participation
  • Autonomy and independence
  • Education, training and information
  • Cooperation among cooperatives
  • Concern for Community
Acknowledgement at EU level: the 2019 Clean Energy for all Europeans Package

- ½ of EU citizens could be producing their own energy by 2050, meeting 45% of the EU’s energy demand. 89% could be participating in some sort of energy system activity (e.g., demand response)
- CECs = Recast Directive 2019/944 (the Internal Electricity Market Directive, or IEMD)
- Requires Member States to secure certain rights of energy communities and establish enabling frameworks to ensure a level playing field and promote their development.
  - Deadline of transposition: summer 2021
What kind of activities do citizen energy cooperatives focus on?

- Production
- Supply
- Distribution
- Flexibility – Storage, Demand response, & VPP
- Energy monitoring
- District heating
- Transportation - E-car sharing
- Energy savings - Collective home retrofits
Citizen Led Renovation & Community Heating and Cooling

- Buildings are responsible for 36% of GHG emissions, and H&C represents 50% of our energy consumption.

- In Ireland, a local energy community has renovated over 800 homes and 25 communal buildings, they have seen 8.8GWh of energy savings.

- In Denmark 75% of all district heating systems are owned by cooperatives.

- Profits from these activities are re-invested in the local community, creating added value and jobs.
Transforming how we use energy (and other resources)

• Decommodifying energy: moving from profit orientation to self-sufficiency
  • Across the EU, energy cooperatives own projects of 7.2–9.9 GW capacity, i.e., able to cover the needs of their 2+ million members

• Reinvesting profits into their local communities

• Tackling energy poverty (Hyperion - Greece)
Democratic governance

● In many EU countries energy communities function under a 1 member = 1 vote system.

● Transparency checks and balances (GA, BOD, Oversight Board)

● Gender Equality & Inclusion Action Plans (Goiener is a good example!) /
  ○ REScoop working to make this a statutory commitment
In the (k)now: climate finance

• 2020-2030: decade of implementation. From ‘what’ to ‘how’

• Climate finance dominating global climate politics (including COPs)

• Finding the money, but also channeling it towards the right directions

• To de-risk community energy investments and crowd-in private finance, public finance is needed
Public Financing Tracker: Purpose and objectives

This tracker is a collaboration between REScoop.eu, CEE Bankwatch Network and CAN-Europe. Its purpose is to inform community energy practitioners and policy makers of the availability of supportive programs for Energy Communities at National level.

Key objectives
1. Create transparency in the utilisation of EU funds.
2. Support conversations with managing authorities, and allow for civil participation.
3. Provide guidance to set up successful programs dedicated to energy communities.
Building the map

Methodological Steps

1. Mobilised campaigners from various Member States -> combed through national plans

2. Corroborating the findings: Bilateral discussions with NGOs & Managing Authorities

Colour assignment based on Analytical Framework

- Allocation & transposition
- Link to a wider scope of activities and objectives
- Transparency and inclusiveness
Colour Grading

Here is an explanation of the logic behind the colours:

- No mentions of energy communities or related concepts
- Mentions of energy communities but in a limited capacity
- Specific mentions of energy communities, but limited to a specific type of actor or activity
- Specific mentions of energy communities with a full scope of activities and actors included
Recovery and Resilience Fund (19 Member States)
Modernisation Fund
Cohesion & ERDF
What makes Italy and Spain stand out?

- They integrate specific budget lines for ECs OPs
- Alignment with EU definitions & set strong social criteria to tackle corporate capture (minimum citizen inclusion, tackling energy poverty...) and promote a just, inclusive transition
- Holistic support: legal, admin, capacity building, grid connections / in most cases only parts of the project development chain are targeted
- Process is transparent and inclusive (civil society + ECs are part of the Monitoring Committees)
Explore our tracker!

https://www.rescooop.eu/financing-tracker
Civil society in CEE is ringing the alarm bell: EU funds must not be misused

- Money is spent without transparency, or CSO involvement -> pervasive risk of corruption
- Investments that counter the EU’s goals / REPowerEU proposals to fund fossil fuels!
- Bureaucracy & red tape discourages smaller actors

Other policies to unlock the potential of energy communities

- One Stop Shops: aggregating information, easy access

- Permitting: bike lanes for energy communities (add social elements to tackle corporate capture)

- Legal framework & policy targets: transpose the EU Directives and set % policy targets by 2030-40 (NL, Scotland)

- Creating a level playing regulatory field: simplify administrative processes, provide financial incentives