

# Energy Citizenship in Europe

## EnergyPROSPECTS Factsheet Series

### **Part 2:**

## **Motivations and objectives**



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**Case researchers participating in the identification and data collection of cases:**

Adriana Dimova (ARC Fund), Anita Szöllőssy (GDI), Anna Farady (GDI), Ariane Debourdeau (TUB), Benjamin Schmid (UG), Camille Defard (JDI), Cecília Lohász (GDI), Claudia Buse (TUB), Desislava Asenova (ARC Fund), Edina Vadovics (GDI), Fanny Lajarthe (ULB), Ivars Kudreņickis (LU), Jānis Brizga (LU), Juan Carlos Brenlla Blanco (UDC), Karin Thalberg (JDI), Kristóf Vadovics (GDI), Linda Zsemberovszky (GDI), Luisa Losada Puente (UDC), Manuel García-Fernández (UDC), Marianna Markantoni (UM), Marie Delair (JDI), Marko Hajdinjak (ARC Fund), Myrto Ispyridou (ARC Fund), Nuria Rebollo Quintela (UDC), Orsolya Antal (GDI), Petar Kanchev (ARC Fund), Rasa Ikstena (LU), Rene Kemp (UM)

**Proofreading by** Simon Milton

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**For further information about the factsheets**, please contact GreenDependent Institute at [info@greendependent.org](mailto:info@greendependent.org).

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## Introduction

This document is Part 2 of the EnergyPROSPECTS Factsheet Series. We have created the Series to publish the results of the mapping of energy citizenship in Europe, along with the first stage of our analysis of the data. The EnergyPROSPECTS consortium mapped 596 cases of energy citizenship (ENCI) and collected data on many aspects of the latter. Although the analysis is a work in progress, we believe it is important to share our data and, through it, contribute to the understanding of energy citizenship in Europe.

The methodology for the data collection and analysis is presented in [Part 1 of the Factsheet Series](#) (Vadovics, Szöllőssy, 2023); for this reason, it is not repeated here.

The Factsheet Series includes the following parts:

1. [Part 1: Introduction and Methodology](#)
2. **Part 2: Motivations and Objectives**
3. [Part 3: Actors and Organisations](#)
4. [Part 4: Funding](#)
5. [Part 5: Aspects of ENCI I.: Hybridity, private/public, passive/active forms](#)
6. [Part 6: Aspects of ENCI II.: Frontrunners and late adopters, pragmatic and transformative ENCI](#)
7. [Part 7: Aspects of ENCI III.: Towards social sustainability: citizen power and equity/justice issues](#)
8. [Part 8: Aspects of ENCI IV.: Towards environmental sustainability: levels of environmental sustainability and recognising ecological limits](#)
9. [Part 9: Aspects of ENCI V.: Contesting the current system](#)



## Part 1: Sources of motivation

Q24. Why did the case start, what inspired its conception, **what motivated its start?**<sup>1</sup>

One of the key aspects of the energy citizenship case studies was identifying the primary motivation for starting them. **The largest proportion of cases are those intended to contribute to the energy transition (35.4%).** This is followed by cases motivated by the goal of producing and using renewable energy (27.9%) and then by those that aim to increase public involvement (24.7%). This is followed, in terms of motivation, by the recognition of the seriousness of climate change and then by the desire for more self-sufficiency.

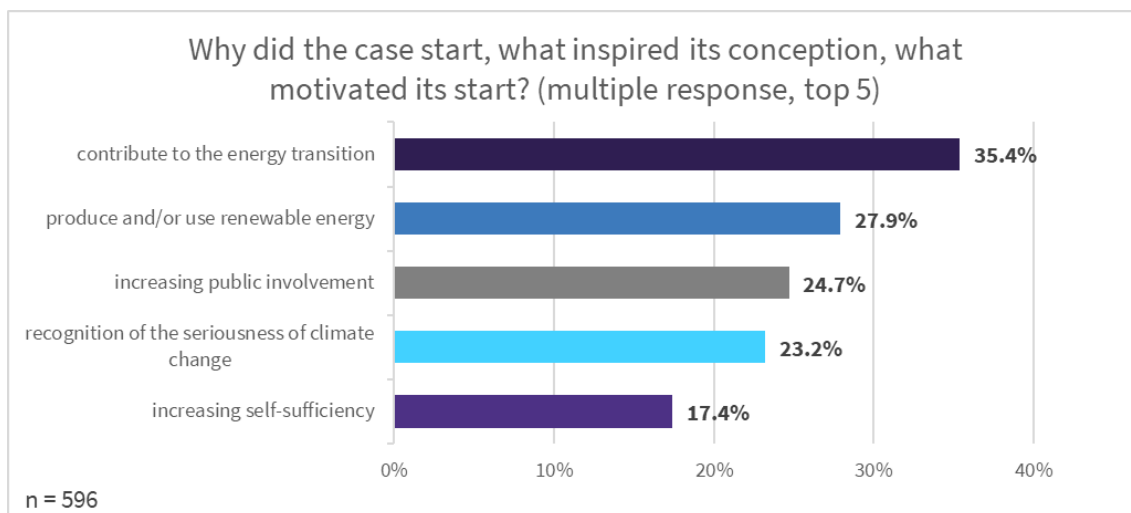


Figure 1: Most common sources of motivation and inspiration

**Among the sources of motivation and inspiration, the proportion of “Other” answers was large, at 30.2 percent.** Among these, several types of answers were given.

Some initiatives started due to a more general, holistic source of motivation, e.g., “Be a model city for environmental activities”, “Create a scalable operating model for cities and municipalities to strengthen their regional economies and enhance employment”, and “Help the programming of EU funds for regional energy support” and “implementation of local climate strategy”.

<sup>1</sup> Questions from the mapping questionnaire. Details about the methodology and questions are available here: [https://www.energyprospects.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/ENERGY\\_PROSPECTS.EU/Deliverables/EnergyPROSPECTS\\_D3.1\\_310122\\_Final.pdf](https://www.energyprospects.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/ENERGY_PROSPECTS.EU/Deliverables/EnergyPROSPECTS_D3.1_310122_Final.pdf)

Also, some answers indicated a specific form of motivation related to a particular area of sustainability, e.g., *“Increase access to locally produced products”* or *“To live in harmony with nature”*. Some involved a specific local purpose, e.g., *“...because of the housing problems in Oslo”* and *“To connect citizen collectives in the Netherlands and help them to overcome obstacles together”*.

Some of the responses indicated a specific focus on an equality-related issue, e.g., *“Provide safe and clean energy to vulnerable households and households at risk of energy poverty”* or *“Promote access to health and well-being”* or *“[due to the] necessity for women, in particular, to engage with new energy technology”*.

Goals related to mobility also appeared, e.g., *“Test and develop ways for the municipality to work with sustainable mobility”*, *“Offer e-car sharing in rural areas”*, and *“Safer streets for cyclists”*.

A desire for more sustainable architecture and housing were repeated sources of motivation, e.g., *“Raising awareness related to sustainable building”* and *“Demonstrate green, low carbon lifestyle and building”*.

A wish to reach out to schools, universities and youth is also reflected in the responses, e.g., *“To create better conditions in this district to purposefully increase the level of energy awareness with an emphasis on children and youth”*, and *“Experimenting with a new communication model that sees children as the main actors of communication”*.

Inspirations linked to a specific energy source are also listed, such as: *“[Address] expected impacts of planned wind turbines (destroy the landscape, devalue homes, cause disruption to local life through noise, shadow flicker, health issues, visual impact)”* and *“Provide an option for residents without their own roof to participate in solar plants”*.

Another specific source of motivation for cases is related to nuclear energy – e.g., *“[Reduce] risk of nuclear conflicts and accidents”* and *“Preventing a nuclear waste depot in the region”*.

## Reformative and transformative cases

With **both transformative and reformative cases, the primary motivation is to promote and contribute to the energy transition**. In second place in both categories is the production/use of renewable energy. Thus, concerning the two most important sources of motivation for starting ENCI cases, no difference is discernible between the whole database and reformative/transformative cases.

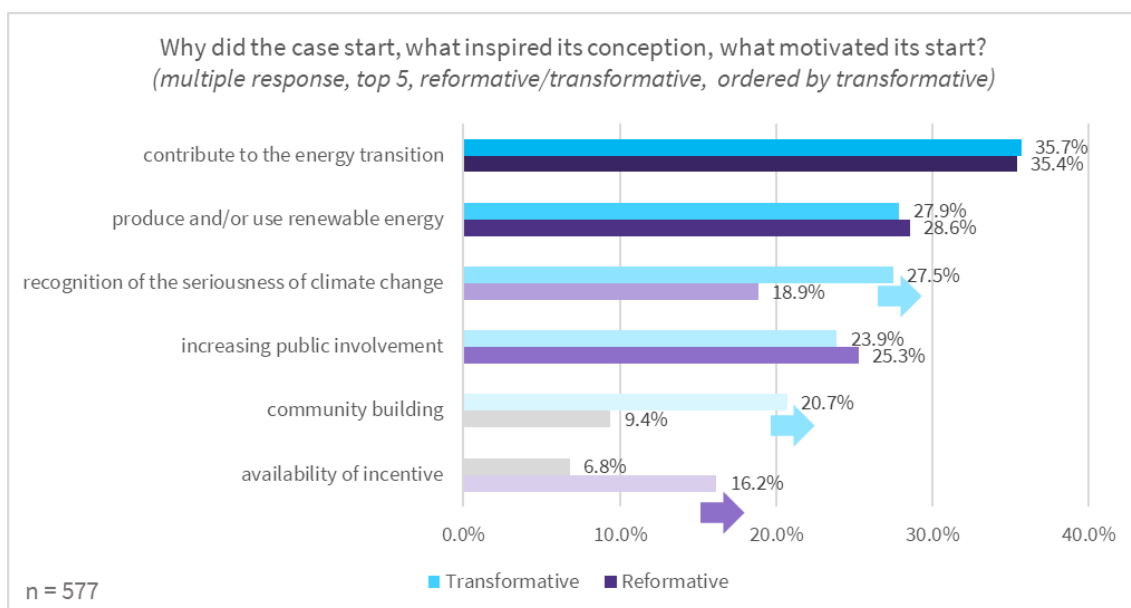


Figure 2: Main sources of motivation in a reformative - transformative split

The first interesting difference is with the kinds of inspiration mentioned in third and fourth place. For the transformative cases, recognising the seriousness of climate change is the third most important source of motivation, which is associated with this category in significantly larger proportions than in the reformative cases (T: 27.5% - R: 18.9%). As for the reformative cases, increasing public involvement was ranked third but in only slightly larger proportions than for the transformative cases, for which this source of motivation was ranked fourth.

The next interesting difference is with the source of motivation ranked in fifth place. Here, a significantly larger proportion of transformative cases identified community building as a motivation (T: 20.7% - R: 9.4%), while in the reformative cases, a significantly



larger proportion indicated the availability of an incentive to start the case (e.g., funding) (T: 6.8% - R: 16.2%).

Looking at the question of **inspiration in relation to the “High/Medium” and “No/Low” data breakdown of cases,**<sup>2</sup> we see a huge difference in the first and most important source of motivation. While in the “High/Medium” cases, the recognition of the seriousness of climate change was clearly the strongest source of motivation, this was negligible in the other group (H/M: 46.2% - N/L: 10%).

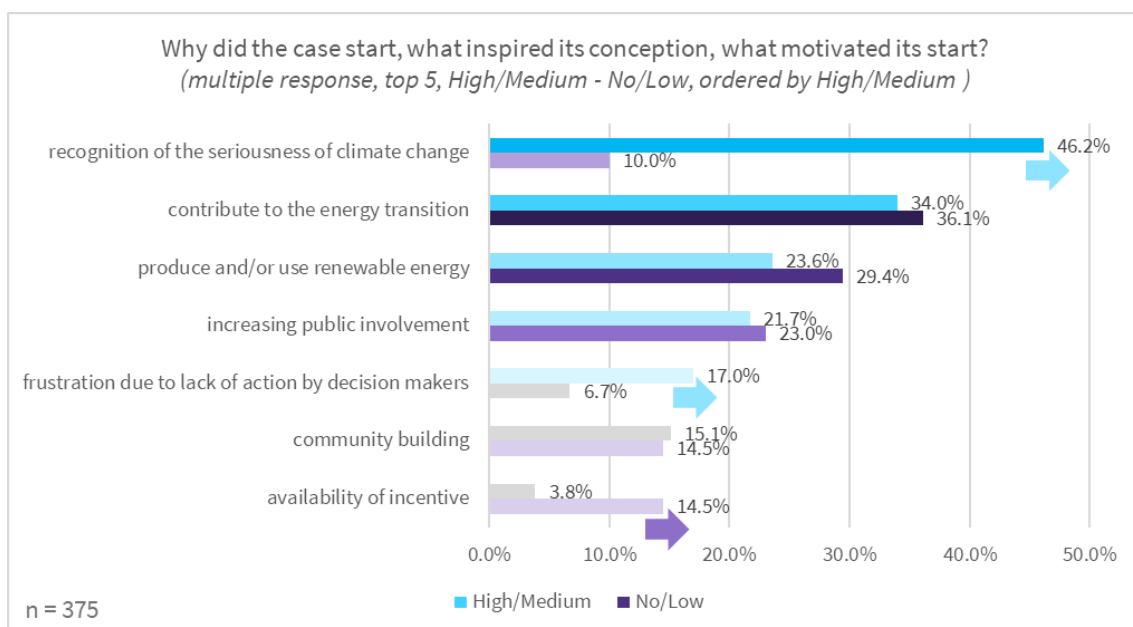


Figure 3: Main sources of motivation in a “High/Medium” – “No/Low” split

The next item to highlight is frustration due to the lack of action by decision-makers, which ranks fifth among the sources of motivation for the “High/Medium” cases, significantly higher than in the other group (H/M: 17% - N/L: 6.7%). On the other hand, in the “No/Low” group, the availability of an incentive was ranked significantly higher, the fifth most important source of motivation in this group (H/M: 3.8% - N/L: 14.5%).

<sup>2</sup> Please refer to **Part 1: Introduction and Methodology** of the Factsheet Series for an explanation of this data breakdown (Vadovics, Szöllőssy, 2023).



We also examined whether there are **differences in the main sources of motivation and inspirations among the ten ideal types of ENCI.**<sup>3</sup> For example, Type 5: "Make their voice heard" ENCI is significantly more liable to have the goal of increasing public involvement among their sources of motivation than other ideal types, notably Types 1, 2, 3, 7 and 10. For Type 10: "Make their claims", the proportion of those motivated by frustration due to the lack of action by decision-makers is significantly larger than in Types 2, 5, 7, and 8.

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<sup>3</sup> For the ten ENCI ideal types distinguished in the EnergyPROSPECTS project, please see [Debourdeau et al., 2021](#).



## Regions of Europe

The main motivations for starting the cases are different in the four regions of Europe.

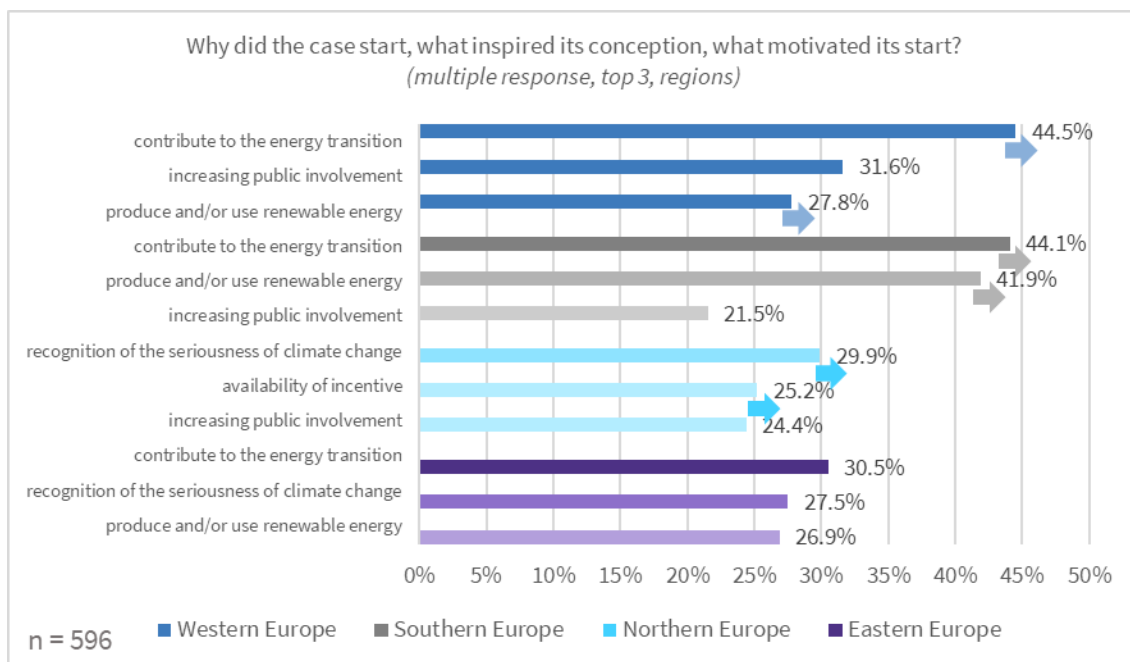


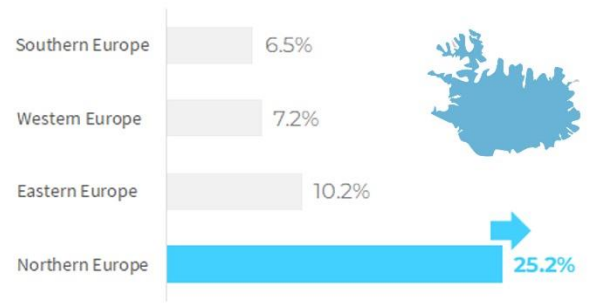
Figure 4: Main sources of motivation by regions

In Western Europe, the primary motivation was wishing to contribute to the energy transition (44.5%), followed by a desire to increase public involvement (31.6%) and to produce and/or use renewable energy (27.8%). In Southern Europe, contributing to the energy transition (44.1%) was also the most important source of motivation, but then the order is reversed, with producing and using renewable energy in second place (41.9%), followed by increasing public involvement (21.5%). However, in Northern Europe, the primary motivation was the recognition of the seriousness of climate change (29.9%), followed by availability of an incentive (25.2%), then increasing public involvement (24.4%) on the third place. Finally, in Eastern Europe, wishing to contribute to the energy transition is again ranked at the top of the list in terms of sources of motivation (30.5%), followed by recognition of the seriousness of climate change (27.5%), with a wish to produce and/or use renewable energy in third place (26.9%).

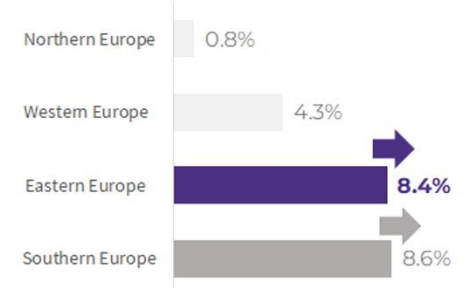
In terms of disaggregation between regions, there are some significant differences in motivation. For example, the share of cases inspired by those seeking to contribute to the energy transition was significantly larger in Western Europe than in the East and North of Europe and greater in Southern Europe than in the North.

In Northern Europe, the availability of an incentive as a source of motivation was significantly more common than in the other regions. In Eastern and Southern Europe, the proportion of cases where motivations was due to dissatisfaction because energy transition is not going fast enough was significantly greater than in the Northern region.

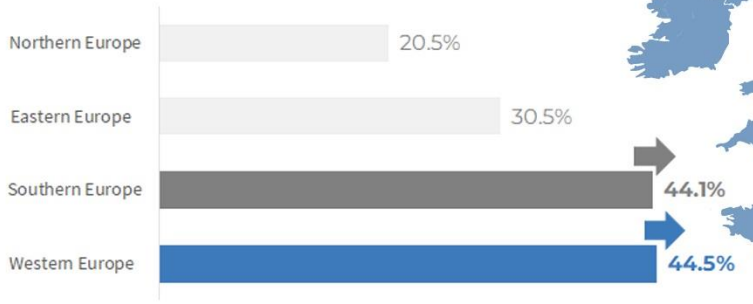




Why did the case start, what inspired its conception, what motivated its start? - **Availability of incentive**



Why did the case start, what inspired its conception, what motivated its start? - **Discontent because energy transition is not going fast enough**



Why did the case start, what inspired its conception, what motivated its start? - **Contribute to the energy transition**

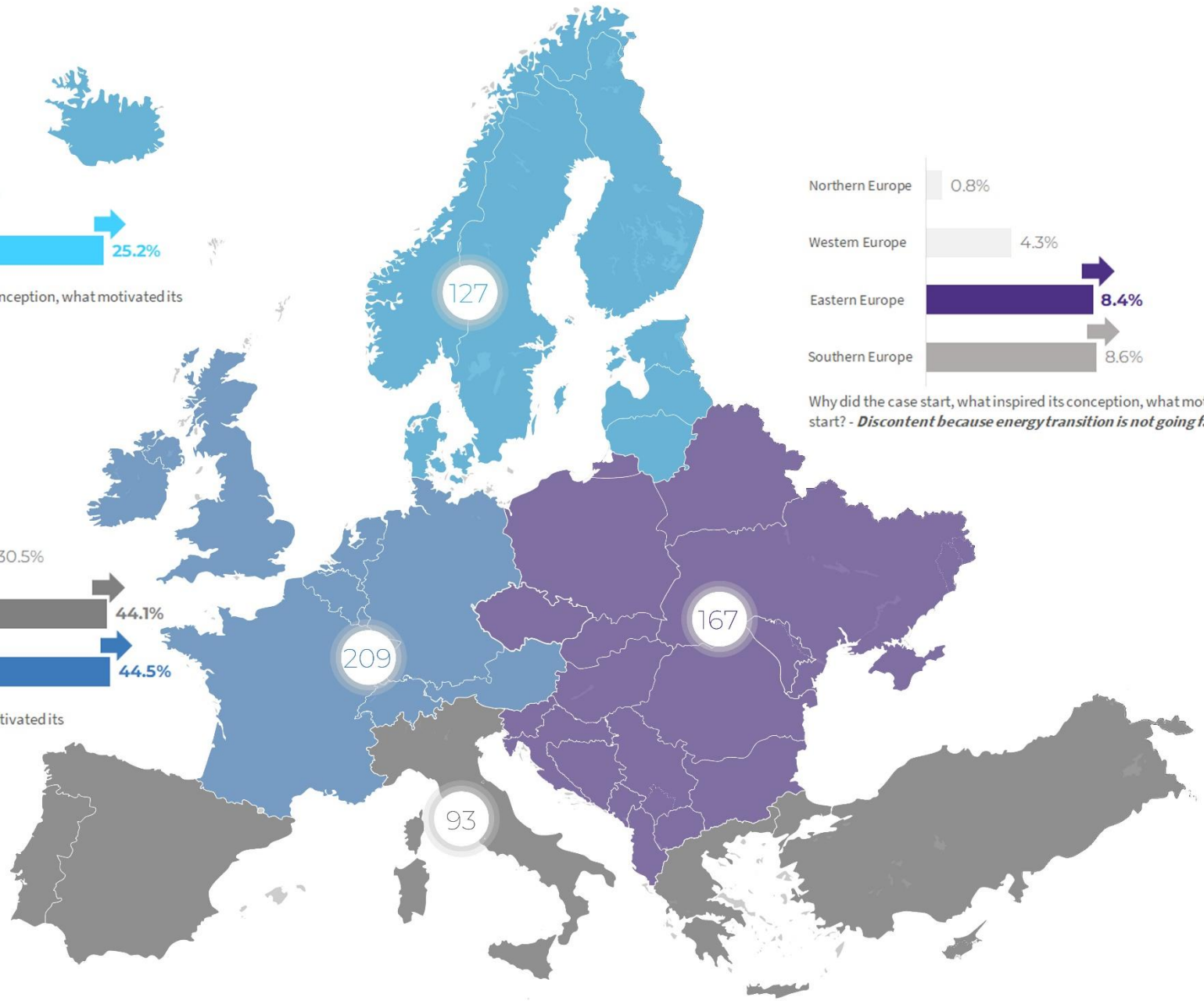


Figure 5: Differences between sources of motivation by region

## Part 2: Objectives

Q25. What do the actors involved in the case want to achieve in the first place/most importantly? **What are/were the main objectives, aims?**

In addition to identifying the motivation for the cases, identifying and describing objectives also played a key role in the ENCI case studies. The analysis shows that **reducing the carbon footprint was the main objective in the majority** of cases (33.4%). This was followed by a desire to save energy (25.5%) and to promote climate action (21.5%). In fourth place was increasing and achieving self-sufficiency (20.8%), and then reducing dependence on fossil fuels (18.8%) in fifth place.

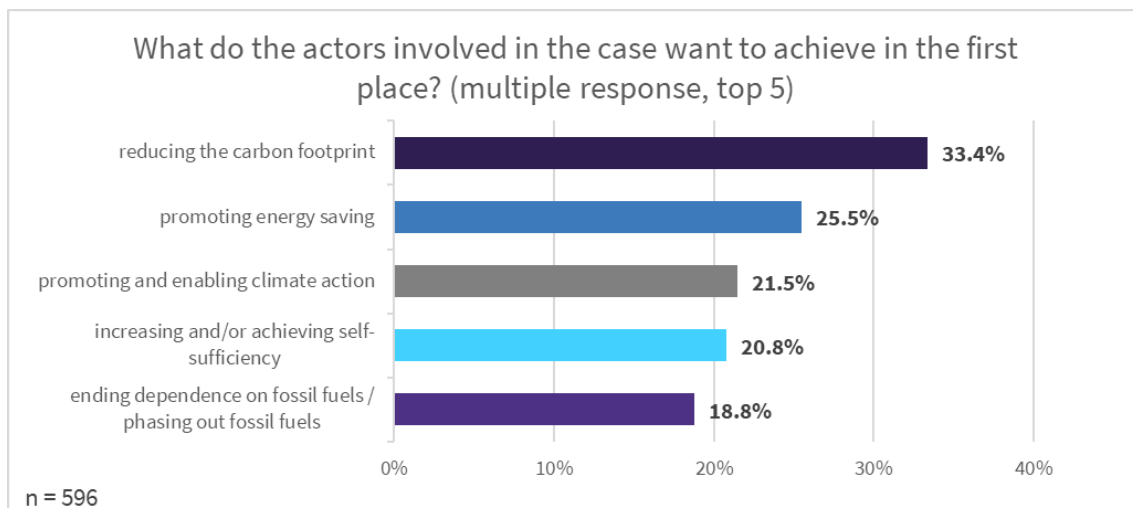


Figure 6: Most common aims of actors

With regard to the things that the actors wanted to achieve in first place, the proportion of “Other” responses was even greater than with the sources of motivation, at 35.9%. However, the themes of these responses were also similar to those associated with the sources of inspiration.

We also identified general, broad, holistic goals, such as: “Engage municipal officials and politicians and obtain their commitment to leadership in climate policy”, “Reduce carbon emissions across sectors”, and “[create a] carbon-free, energy self-sufficient, and waste-free city”. There were also even more general goals like “Set an example”.

Some cases had a specific sustainability objective, such as *“Showing an example of responsible travel”*, *“[Supporting the] economic, optimal use of land resources”*, and *“Reduce deforestation.”*

More specific, localised themes could also be identified, such as: *“Promote solar energy in Sweden”*, *“[Provide] advice to the Irish Government”*, and *“Expansion of PV [use] in the region of Zürich”*.

Equality-related issues also appeared here, such as *“Climate justice”*, *“Deal[...] with social problems”*, *“[Promote] equal access to resources”*, *“Increase the proportion of women leaders in the energy sector”*, and *“Promote and defend consumer interests”*.

Here, too, the theme of schools and youth returned in references to objectives, e.g., *“Assist schools in their sustainability and educational work”*, *“Educat[e] youngsters [about] sustainable energy”*, *“Empower[...] children [to] initiat[e] climate action”*, *“Involve school staff and students in reducing energy consumption in their school”* and *“Rais[e] awareness and provid[e] educational materials for elementary school children in the field of energy efficiency”*.

Among other targets, objectives included meeting mobility-related targets, e.g., *“[Supporting] environmentally friendly mobility.”* *“Rais[ing] awareness of the importance of using alternative ways of transportation in cities”* and *“Protest[ing] for bike-friendly traffic planning”*.

Sustainable architecture and housing were also included among the themes of the objectives, e.g., *“Having many energy efficient (especially passive) houses and buildings built”*, *“Offer[ing] alternative housing conditions”*, or *“[Making general] improvements to the state of buildings”* and *“Promot[ing] the use of organic and natural insulating materials to reduce the energy consumption of buildings”*.

Other targets were linked to specific resources, too, such as *“Developing local photovoltaic energy production”*, *“Expan[d]ing the use of] solar energy to improve the overall eco-balance”*, or *“For their biomass plant to reduce/reuse waste from agricultural waste”*, *“Replac[ing] a ‘traditional’ natural gas grid with a district heating network”* and *“[Offering] a fast, efficient and sustainable mobility alternative”*.



Some objectives were related to nuclear energy production, e.g., “[Encouraging] nuclear phase-out in electricity provision” and “Replac[ing] the share of nuclear power in the electricity mix of the city of Bern with solar power”.





## Reformative and transformative cases

In **both the transformative and reformative cases, the most common objective was defined as reducing the carbon footprint**, with no significant difference between the two groups of cases (T: 30% - R: 35.7%).

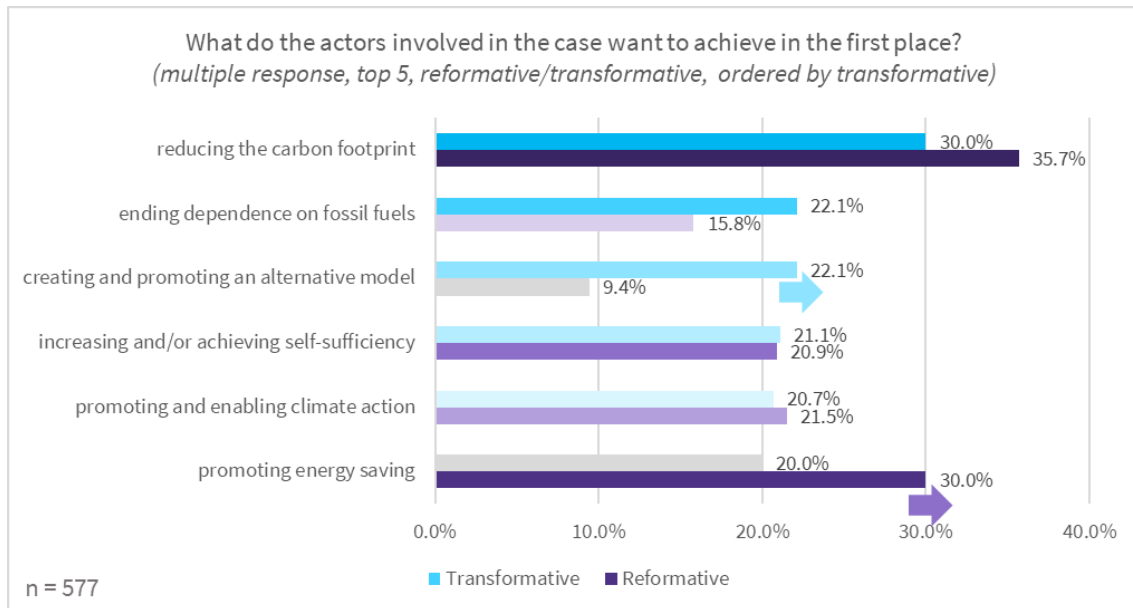


Figure 7: Main goals in a reformative - transformative split

In second place, cases in the reformative category had the promotion of energy savings as a goal significantly more often than those in the transformative category (T: 20% - R: 30%).

Ranked joint second in the cases in the transformative group were the objectives 'ending dependence on fossil fuels' and 'developing and promoting an alternative societal and/or economic model', with the same proportion of responses (22.1%). However, the objective of creating an alternative model was present in significantly larger proportions among the transformative cases but only fifth in importance in the reformative category (T: 22.1% - R: 9.4%).

In the transformative category, the objectives of increasing and/or achieving self-sufficiency and promoting and enabling climate action were ranked a close fourth and fifth (21.1%; 20.7%, respectively). Finally, in the reformative group, the same two objectives, in reverse order but also neck and neck, were in third and fourth place (21.5%; 20.9%).

In terms of the question of **what the actors originally wanted to achieve**, there are **also some significant differences between the “High/Medium” and “No/Low” cases.**

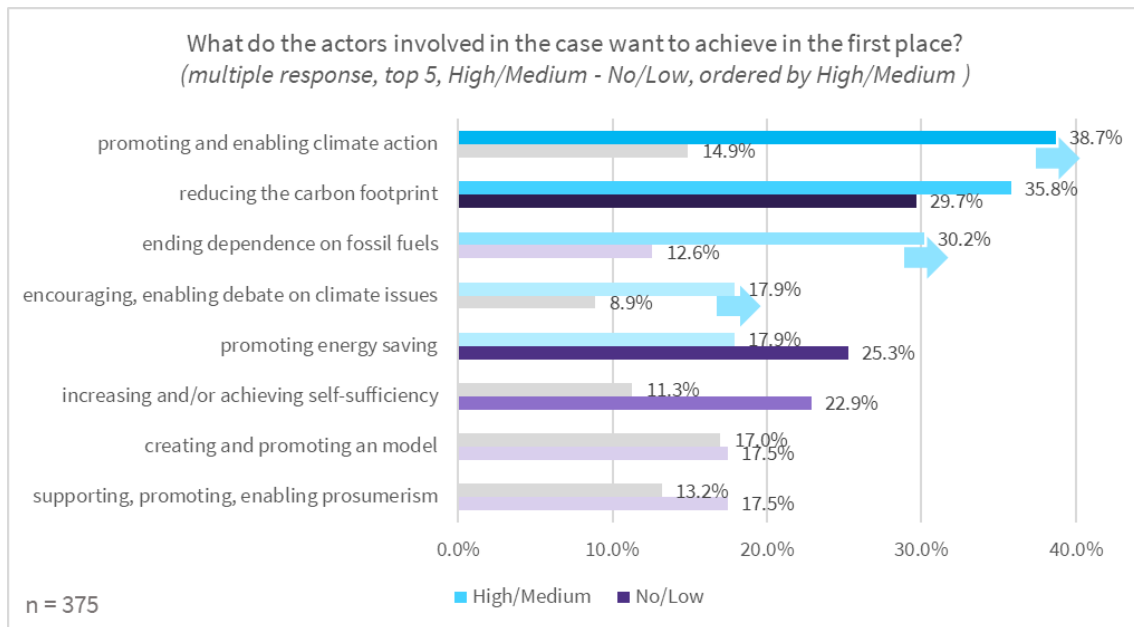


Figure 8: Main goals in a “High/Medium” – “No/Low” split

For the “High/Medium” cases, the promotion of climate action is the priority, with a significantly larger proportion driven by this goal than in the “No/Low” group (H/M: 38.7% - N/L: 14.9%). There is also a significant difference in the third-ranked goal for “High/Medium” cases, ‘ending dependence and/or phasing out of fossil fuels’ (H/M: 30.2% - N/L: 12.6%), and the fourth-ranked goal of ‘encouraging climate action’ (H/M: 17.9% - N/L: 8.9%). In the “No/Low” cases, more cases seek to promote energy saving and achieve self-sufficiency, but the difference is not significant.

Looking at the **disaggregation according to the ten ENCI ideal types**, some **significant differences can also be highlighted in terms of objectives**. For example, Type 5 is associated with significantly more cases intended to encourage or enable debate about energy and/or climate issues compared to Types 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7. For Type 1: "Do their bit" ENCI, there is also a significant difference in terms of the goal of promoting energy savings than in some other groups such as Type 5, 8 and 10.

## Regions of Europe

When analysed by region, some differences in the objectives that actors primarily wanted to achieve can be identified, but **the priority for all regions is reducing the carbon footprint.**

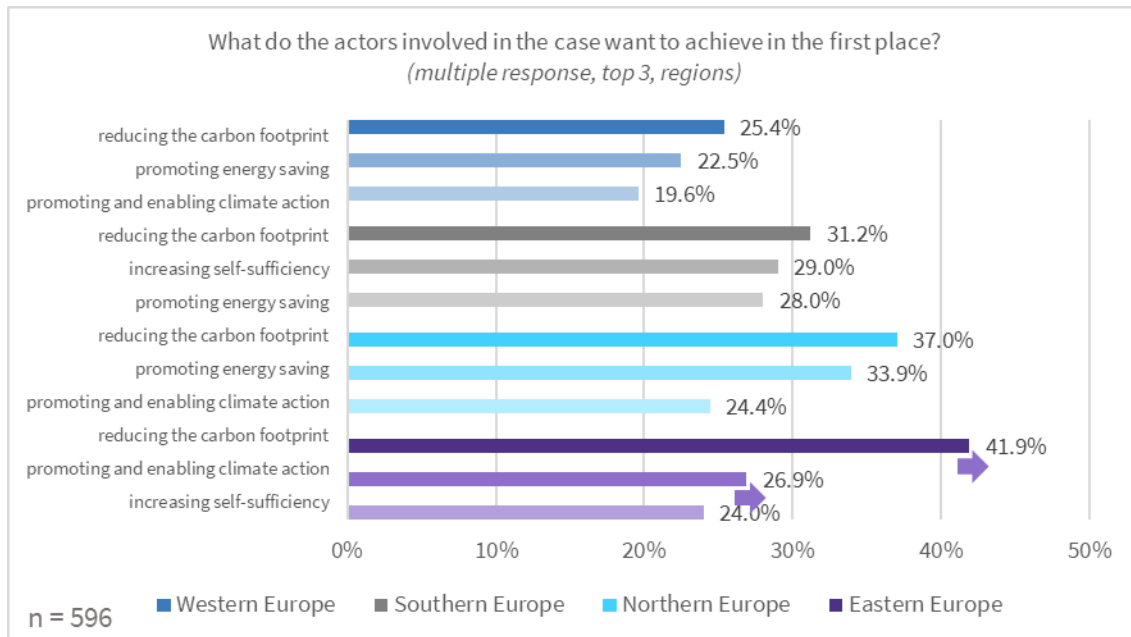


Figure 9: Main goals by regions

In Western Europe, promoting energy saving (22.5%) is ranked in second place, followed by promoting and enabling climate action (19.6%). In Southern Europe, increasing and/or achieving self-sufficiency (29%) is in second place, with promoting energy saving (28%) third. In Northern Europe, promoting energy saving (33.9%) is listed second, followed by promoting and enabling climate action (24.4%). Finally, in Eastern Europe, promoting and enabling climate action (24.4%) is second, and increasing and/or achieving self-sufficiency (24%) third.

Despite the fact that reducing the carbon footprint is the top goal in all regions, it is a significantly more prominent objective in the Eastern European cases than in the West. Energy democracy is a substantially more common goal in Western and Southern Europe than in Eastern Europe. Also, the proportion of initiatives that target alleviating energy poverty is significantly larger in the south of Europe compared to in the north and west.

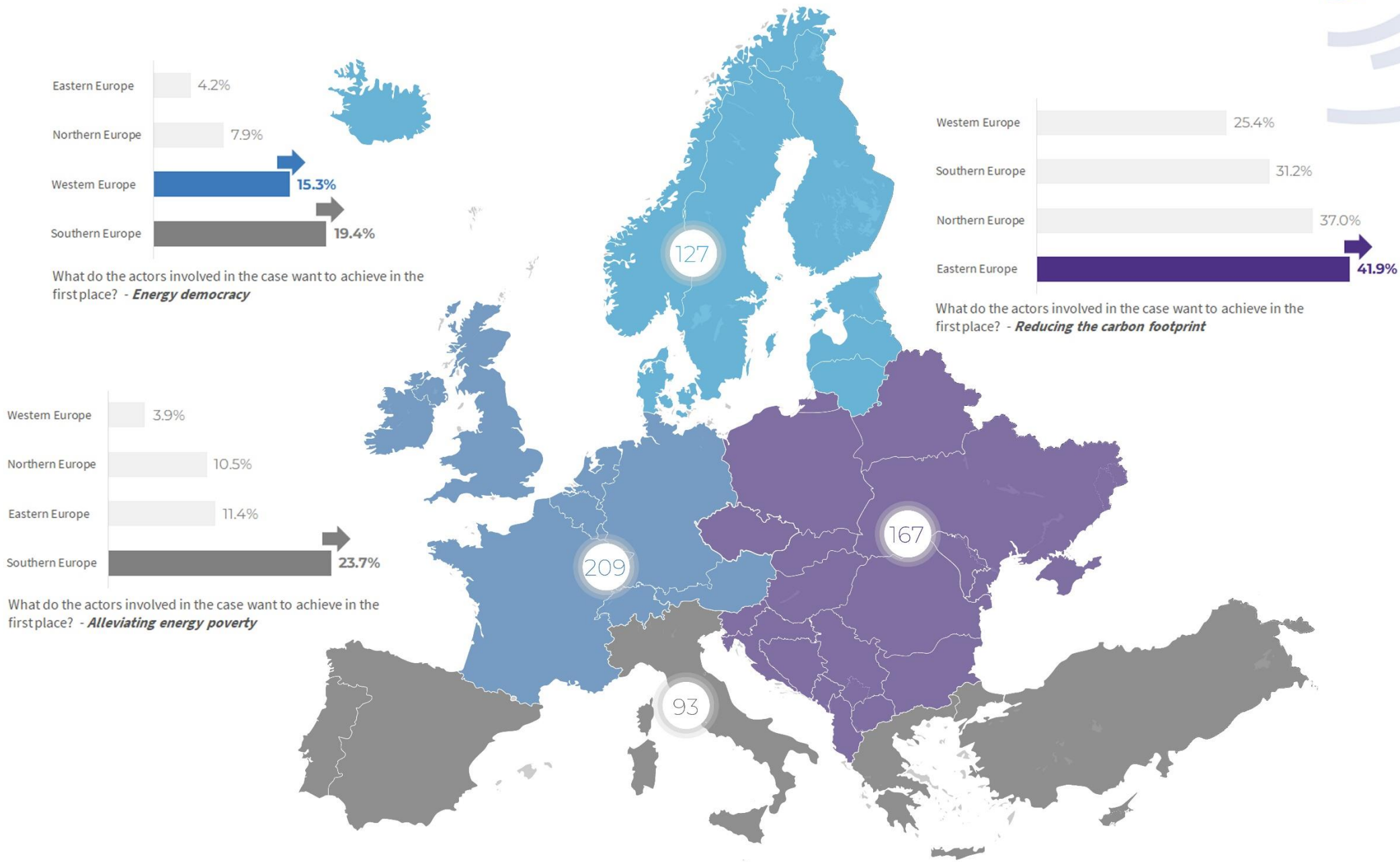


Figure 10: Differences between goals by regions

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## EnergyPROSPECTS partners

**University of Galway (UoG)**  
University Road, H91 TK33, Galway, Ireland



**Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB),**  
Avenue Franklin Roosevelt 50-1050, Bruxelles, Belgium



**GreenDependent Institute (GDI),**  
2100 Gödöllő, Éva u. 4., Hungary



**Universiteit Maastricht (UM),**  
Minderbroedersberg 4-6, 6200 MD, Maastricht, Netherlands



**Applied Research and Communications Fund (ARC Fund),**  
Alexander Zhendov Street 5, 1113, Sofia, Bulgaria



**Notre Europe – Institut Jacques Delors (JDI),**  
18, rue de Londres 75009, Paris, France



**University of Latvia (UL),**  
Raiņa bulvāris 19, LV-1586, Riga, Latvia



**Technische Universität Berlin (TUB),**  
Straße des 17. Juni 135, 10623, Berlin, Germany



**Universidade da Coruña (UDC),**  
Rúa da Maestranza 9, 15001 A Coruña, Spain

