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Deliverable 6.1

Feedback report on knowledge exchange workshops

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Summary

This deliverable *'Feedback report on knowledge exchange workshops'* gathers the outcomes and feedback received during the national and European knowledge exchange workshops that took place between March and October 2023. In total 88 individuals (excluding project staff) participated in these workshops which took place in Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, the Netherlands, and Spain.

This report will support the update of the working paper (Deliverable 6.3 '*Working paper with recommendations'*) for the finalisation of the policy proposals (Deliverable 6.4 '*Four policy briefs with main recommendations per target group'*).

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1. Introduction

Within the EnergyPROPSECTS project the co-creation of policy recommendations with experts, policy makers, and practitioners, is a central element of WP6. The knowledge exchange workshops organised at the European level and in each partner country, served to discuss, validate, and complement the project results. This deliverable *'Feedback report on knowledge exchange workshops'* gathers the outcomes and feedback received during the workshops that took place between March and October 2023.

The European level workshop aimed at discussing overall project findings and their pertinence for EU-level policy and legislation particularly drawing on the EU-level PESTEL-analysis (Debourdeau et al. 2023). The national workshops were specifically based on the national PESTEL analyses (Hajdinjak et al. 2023) as well as the accomplished case study work (Debourdeau et al. 2023; Vadovics et al. 2022) and in-depth case analysis on business and social innovation models (Debourdeau and Markantoni 2023).

After the workshops, the participants were furthermore invited to comment on the *'Open Working Paper'*, which will feed into D6.3 '*Working paper with recommendations'.* The outcomes of the workshops will also contribute to the elaboration of D6.4 '*Four policy briefs with main recommendations per target group'*, in particular the third policy brief that targets national-level decision makers and the fourth that covers EU-level policy and legislation for the advancement of energy citizenship.

The deliverable is structured in the following way: in this first chapter, the translation of key concepts of the project for WP6 purposes are explained, thereafter, the objectives of the workshops at the respective levels are outlined together with the set-up of the workshops, as well as the instructions for organising the workshops. In the second chapter, main conclusions from the workshops are discussed. The two last chapters, Annex 1, and Annex 2, contain the full feedback reports from each workshop.

1.1. Translation of energy citizenship definition and the typology

For WP6, '*From research to policy action: fostering energy citizenship in Europe to achieve decarbonisation goals'*, the energy citizenship definition (Pel *et al.* 2021) and the typology (Debourdeau *et al.* 2021) were adapted to be more practically focused (rather than theoretically) and accessible for a wider audience. The definition of energy citizenship used in WP6 was discussed and approved within the project consortium. The same applies for the simplification of the typology.

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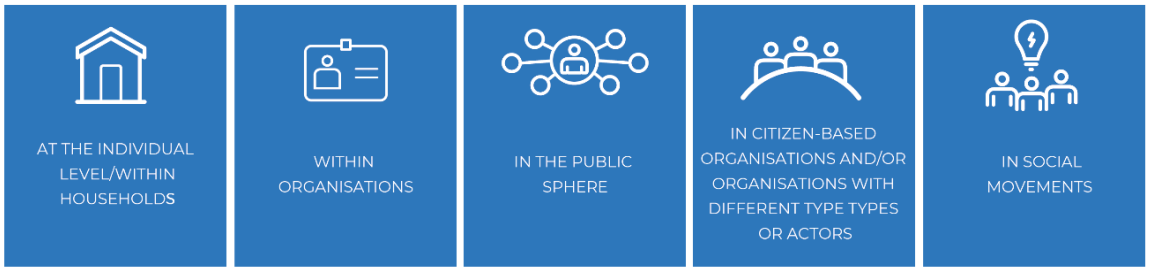
These adapted versions presented in the next section were used in the knowledge exchange workshops, and the feedback reports are structured around the five agency types instead of the complete typology.

1.1.1. Definition of energy citizenship used in the knowledge exchange workshops

Energy citizenship is understood as various forms of civic involvement and engagement that pertain to the development of more sustainable and democratic energy systems and transitions. It can be practised at different levels of action, through different constellations of actors (see the figure below), in the fields of energy production, energy consumption, and in the governance of the energy/climate transition.



1.1.2. Agency types and examples used in the knowledge exchange workshops

Agency type 1: Within households	Changes in individual practices and household equipment
Examples	• Changing to a green electricity provider. • Adopting soft or/and clean mobility options. • Adopting energy saving and efficiency measures, including energy renovation. • Becoming a prosumer through the installation of solar panels. • Using smart metres and appliances. • Aspiring for self-sufficiency through off grid energy sources and storage technologies.
Agency type 2: Within organisations	Changing practices and equipment within private and public organisations, including organisations whose core logic is the energy transition
Examples	• All practices mentioned above carried out within the framework of an organisation. • Providing innovative services and technologies. • Developing new practices, business models and partnerships. • Working as an intermediary organisation that supports other initiatives.

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Agency type 3: **In the public sphere** Examples	**Participation through public debates, elections, deliberative processes, public consultations, referendums, digital consultation platforms, etc.** • Consultations where citizens are invited to express their views on the energy transition in general or regarding a specific topic or project, but their opinions are not mandatory. • Consultations where citizens' opinions are mandatory and a core part of a decision-making process. • Digital participation platforms that enable consultation and proposal-making. • Voting in referendums and elections at different political levels. • Shaping the political offer and the public debate.
Agency type 4: **In citizen-based organisations and/or in constellations with different types of actors** Examples	**Collective participation in citizen-based organisations and/or through collaboration between NGOs, public authorities, municipalities and/or private actors** • Participative frameworks shaped by citizen-based organisations, such as the creation of networks, cooperatives, and communities, sometimes supported by local authorities or other types of intermediary actors. • Opportunities for direct participation in the energy system of the most vulnerable (for example through energy communities). • Citizen involvement in frameworks shaped by NGOs, public authorities, municipalities, and/or private actors, such as involvement in local climate-energy plans, home renovation schemes, buying shares in renewable energy production (as minority shareholders and/or to foster local acceptance).
Agency type 5: **In social movements** Examples	**Participation through social movements linked to various aspects of the energy/climate transition** • Working to enhance the acceptance and acceptability of the energy transition through promoting debate, campaigning, or launching initiatives. • Advocating, protesting, or opposing certain policy-orientations or specific projects through manifestations, direct action, public campaigns, protest networks, occupying movements, etc.

Table adapted from Debourdeau *et al*. 2023. "Catalogue of energy citizenship cases and typologies" EnergyPROSPECTS Deliverable 3.2; and Debourdeau *et al.* 2021. "Conceptual typology". EnergyPROSPECTS Deliverable 2.2, European Commission Grant Agreement No. 101022492.

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1.2. Objectives and set-up of the workshops

1.2.1. EU Knowledge Exchange Workshop

Objectives

- Share needs and constraints when designing policies towards the decarbonisation of the energy system and the contribution of citizens to that end.
- Share experiences, best practices, failures, barriers, successes, and enablers for citizen involvement in the energy transition.
- Discuss how energy citizenship could contribute to tackling the social, democratic and climate crises together.

Set-up

For the EU-level workshop, focused on EU policy and legislation, a background note with key project concepts, framing, and findings was circulated to the invited experts beforehand to familiarise them with the project. The background provided an overview of the case study work conducted in WP3 and the EU-level PESTEL-analysis in WP5.

The invited experts covered all aspects of the energy transition that the EnergyPROSPECTS definition of energy citizenship covers, namely, energy supply, energy demand, and the governance of energy systems and transitions.

The workshop introduced the work conducted within EnergyPROSPECTS and was centred around two large themes of discussion. The themes were introduced by a state of play and preliminary policy recommendations: 1) Enabling energy citizenship in energy supply and demand through social-economic inclusion; and 2) Governing the European energy transition: what roles for citizens? After brief presentations, discussions were held in English, in a closed round-table format for two hours.

1.2.3. National Knowledge Exchange Workshops

Objectives

- Capture the specific context of energy citizenship in each country.

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- Discuss and validate the EnergyPROSPECTS consortium's results from the national PESTEL-analyses and the 596 case studies[1].
- Contribute to the development of policy recommendations that target national policymakers with policy measures and best practices to implement to advance energy citizenship in each one of the nine partner countries (Policy Brief 3).

Set-up

The national-level workshops built on the national PESTEL-analyses that each project partner had conducted of the political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal contexts in their respective countries (for more information on the PESTEL-analyses see Deliverable 5.2). For the purpose of the workshops, the national level PESTEL-analyses provided a sound overview of the landscape of energy citizenship today together with key barriers and enablers for its development.

A wide range of actors were considered as potential experts for these workshops, depending on the pertinence of and accessibility to different actors in each national context. Examples included: decision-makers/policymakers, civil servants, elected representatives, actors from the cases mapped and studied within the project, intermediary actors (as defined in Markantoni *et al.* 2022), experts from research institutes, universities or think tanks, civil society or union representatives, and traditional energy system actors such as utilities, distribution system operators and transmission system operators.

All workshops were carried out in national languages, and the invited experts had been sent a background note in the national language beforehand. The background note was based on the one previously used for the EU-level workshop but also included national specificities from the respective PESTEL-analyses. The project partners were furthermore encouraged to discuss promising business and social innovation models for furthering energy citizenship, to feed into D5.3 *'Models´ scalability and potential strategies to advance energy citizenship'.*

The project partners were provided with a lot of freedom in the set-up of their workshops to adapt them to their national context. In the next section, the instructions elaborated by JDI are presented. The instructions aimed to harmonise the workshops, but nonetheless provide freedom in the way the workshops were configured.

[1] See the EnergyPROSPECTS case database.

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During the same time as the WP6 workshops were planned, planning for workshops for D4.4 *'Enhancing the transformative agency of energy citizenship'* was also underway. As the WP6 and WP4 workshops, to a certain extent, aimed to invite the same type of experts, project partners that needed to organise both workshops (TUB, UG, UM, UL and UDC) were given the opportunity to organise the two workshops together. The co-organisation of the two workshops impacted the content of those workshops to a certain extent. For example, in Germany, they chose to focus on recent developments in German energy and climate legislation instead of presenting the PESTEL.

Instructions to partner organisations

In the months prior to the project partners were provided with instructions that included:

- suggestions on the type of actors to invite; and
- the goal of the workshops and questions to be discussed.

Once JDI (task lead) has carried out the workshop in France, several materials were distributed to the project partners based on the French workshop:

- template save the date;
- template agenda and list of participants;
- template background note;
- template power point presentation;
- and a template for the feedback report.

Thereafter, JDI had bilateral meetings with each partner to help them prepare their workshops in the best way possible. The adapted energy citizenship definition and typology were used across the materials and the workshops. Most partners chose to follow the feedback report template, that was based on the five agency types, but the Belgian, Dutch, and Bulgarian partners chose to do a different outline that better reflected the discussions during their workshops (see Annex 2).

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2. Main conclusions across the EU and national-level workshops

In this chapter, the main conclusions across the ten workshops at the EU-level and in the project partner countries are presented. The conclusions are thematised according to the simplified version of the energy citizenship typology and the five agency types (see section 1.1.). Moreover, a sixth theme of 'transversal' recommendations that have bearing on all five agency types has been added.

2.1. Transversal

Transversal recommendations that emerged from the workshops included:

- There is a risk that the main responsibilities for the energy transition are placed on citizens, and businesses, often without the accompanying acknowledgement of socio-economic and infrastructural constraints. **This conferral of responsibilities to act and change must go hand in hand with the state ensuring that adequate support structures are in place.**
- The transition must include everyone, therefore **special consideration must be made to people living in energy poverty and other vulnerable groups** as well as the acknowledgement of for example generational and urban/rural divides.
- Technologies must be seen as a mean to an end (to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050) and not as a silver bullet: **from techno-optimism towards a socio-technological transition.**
- Focus must be shifted from individual responsibilities and questions of individual ownership of energy infrastructure (e.g., prosumerism) towards the energy transition as a collective endeavour and a sense of collective ownership of the energy system (at the local, regional and/or national scale, depending on what scale is relevant in a particular context), that includes citizens, the public and private sector. There is a need for a collective narrative towards contributing to a common good and objectives that are meaningful for citizens in their everyday lives: **the co-creation credible imaginaries of energy citizenship futures anchored in lived experiences.**
- **Lack of trust is a core concern for the energy transition.** Lack of trust in fellow citizens, public institutions, energy services or the energy transition, appears across all countries, albeit in different forms. This ties both to the cultural, historical political contexts of certain countries, but also to the larger crisis of representative democracy (see more under the sub-section, *In the public sphere*).
- With the proliferation of misinformation and populist communication, there is a need for **coherent, relevant, and accessible information** on the consequences of climate change and the energy transition, energy products and services, available support measures and

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ways to get involved in the transition. **Public points of information need to be streamlined.**

- **Regulatory frameworks that support energy citizenship need to be consistent over time and simplified** (see the sub-sections on agency types 1 and 4). Overall, there is a need to improve and speed up the transposition of relevant EU directives that relate to energy self-consumption, energy sharing, and energy communities.
- **Power-imbalances and policy incoherence within the energy system needs to be addressed.** There is an overall lack of consideration of societal interest in certain debates (for example on industrial policy and hydrogen) as well as the large power-imbalances within the energy system (soaring revenues of fossil fuel companies during the energy price crisis while the costs were primarily born by citizens), which creates incoherence and less legitimacy for energy and climate policy.
- **Well-functioning multi-level governance with clear coordination and responsibilities of public actors** are key levers for citizen engagement and involvement in the energy transition.

2.2. Agency type 1: Within households

Recommendations that emerged from the workshops to support energy citizenship practiced within households included:

- It is imperative to move beyond conceptualizing citizens merely as users and consumers of energy services. **While pricing remains a critical factor, the crucial element of trust emerges as equally significant.** Additionally, equal emphasis needs to be put on energy consumption and production, as well as the participation in governance of the energy system and transition.
- **Energy literacy can be enhanced through the practical experience of participating in the energy system.** For example, the act of individuals installing solar panels both contributes to enhancing renewable energy supply and raises awareness about overall energy consumption. Here, role of cooperatives and associations as bridge builders that foster engagement needs to be emphasized. **Good practice:** Solocal Energy in Germany that mobilises citizens in do-it-yourself balcony solar panel installation circles and for climate awareness and action, which improves energy literacy and turns individual acts into a collective endeavour.
- **Voluntary support structures that allow citizens to engage in the energy system** (such as in the example of Solocal above) **needs to be complemented with professional and publicly funded projects.**
- **Financial incentives and subsidies for the installation of solar panels and energy retrofitting need to be well-constructed, consistent over time and easy to access, for**

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example through one-stop-shops. Technical support as well as simple administrative processes are also needed. For socio-economically disadvantaged households and communities there is a need for 100% cost coverage upon investment and zero/low interest loans. **Good practice:** Hauts-de-France Pass Renovation (France), RenoHub (Hungary), Energy Communities Tipperary Collective (Ireland).

- **To make a basic level of energy consumption accessible for all, and alleviate energy poverty, a state guarantee* of a basic needs amount of energy at a fixed price** could be introduced or **progressive energy tariffs.**
- **Adress the shortage of proficient professionals** capable of installing for example solar panels and implement energy efficiency improvements in buildings. G
- **Facilitating the production and sharing of electricity for tenant associations and condominiums. Good practice:** Tenant Electricity model in Germany.
- Explore innovative financing mechanisms: For example, using the Public Service Obligation levy as a tool for engagement.

2.3. Agency type 2: Within organisations

Recommendations that emerged from the workshops to support energy citizenship practiced within organisations included:

- Special attention needs to be paid to the **emergence and design of adequate support structures for new types of businesses within the energy sector that can support citizen engagement**, for example those specialising in energy renovations.
- **For local authorities and associations, a crucial challenge is the lack of long-term and systematic financing**, which is often limited to annual or pilot projects. An emphasis on **risk-sharing** with the state is highlighted, ensuring that the concept of energy citizenship does not become a mechanism for passing on the risks of the energy system to citizens, associations based on voluntary action or local levels of government.
- **Private sector engagement is recognized as pivotal in financing and propelling the energy transition**. A fundamental consideration is aligning private investments with citizens' needs and interests. It requires a multifaceted and collaborative approach to address financial constraints, legal responsibilities, and the evolving landscape of energy solutions. **Good practice:** Naturstrom AG, notably as member of Entrepreneurs for Future and Companies for Future.
- **Banks can play a transformative role by offering accessible and affordable financial support** for photovoltaic installations or energy retrofitting at lower interest rates. Environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) investing by banks can enhance commitment to financing green projects. **Good practice:** KfW ("Credit Institute for

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Reconstruction") in Germany, a public law legal entity that finances high efficiency housing projects.

- **Recognizing the roles of public regulators, energy providers, and infrastructure operators is essential, emphasizing their legal responsibility for enabling conditions necessary for the transition**. However, these key actors may miss opportunities to meaningfully engage with the public, despite growing interest and involvement in energy-related issues. There is a general lack of transparency of energy market actors' work and lack of cooperation/willingness to give up their control (e.g., DSOs). The conflict of interest for energy providers and grid operators when consumers organise and seek independence was especially highlighted in Hungary, this needs to be taken into consideration by policy makers when promoting small-scale citizen-led energy production.

2.4. Agency type 3: In the public sphere

Recommendations that emerged from the workshops to support energy citizenship practiced within the public sphere included:

- Across the European Union, **there is a fatigue of representative democracy** that expresses itself in various ways, such as the lack of trust for institutions and decision-makers and the rise of populist discourse and political parties[2]. Exploring the **integration of citizens' assemblies** within the energy system framework offers a potential avenue for addressing the fatigue in representative democracy and finding a balance between participation and representation.
- Regarding trust, **small-scale initiatives play a crucial role in rebuilding trust, particularly within vulnerable communities. Here, NGOs can play an important intermediary role.**
- **The energy transition debate is marked by sharp divisions and protests**, and even threats against renewable energy producers. **Positive examples of successful transitions are deemed essential to demonstrate that fair change is achievable.** Addressing the stigmatization of climate protectors is identified as a significant challenge, requiring a depolarized conversation for a more inclusive discourse.
- **Participative, and deliberative exercises emerge as effective tools for consensus-building and collective foresight.** While consultations are recognized as crucial, there is a

[2] OECD (2023), Government at a Glance 2023, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/3d5c5d31-en.

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call for a shift toward more collaborative approaches. This involves a change in language and communication strategies to **enhance inclusivity**, ensuring broader public engagement. **Good practice:** The Fair Energy Transition for All project (see the French feedback report), focusing on energy poverty, stands out as a good practice. By establishing a dynamic feedback loop involving both citizens and experts, the project not only allows for initial input but also actively involves contributors in challenging recommendations, showcasing the impact of **a collaborative citizen-expert dynamic**.

- Overcoming challenges in the energy transition requires addressing the **lack of willingness and capacity among stakeholders to meaningfully engage in public debates.** Furthermore, there is a noted absence of space in legislative procedures for these debates, limiting avenues for citizen involvement.
- **Consumer advocacy organizations** are absent during decision preparation (Hungary). Advocacy for better utilisation of existing tools, such as the Energy Ombudsman/Mediator, is emphasized to ensure social control over decisions made by monopolistic providers.

2.5. Agency type 4: Collective participation in citizen-based organisations and/or through collaboration between NGOs, public authorities, municipalities and/or private actors

Recommendations that emerged from the workshops to support energy citizenship practiced through collective participation in citizen-based organisations and/or through collaboration between NGOs, public authorities, and/or private actors included:

- **Exploring alternative financing models such as crowdfunding holds great potential, fostering direct monetary and social participation.** This approach counters the "not in my backyard" attitude and could benefit from increased peer learning at the European level, promoting knowledge exchange between initiatives.
- **Engaging in partnerships with private businesses is recognized as a strategy to further the transition,** particularly in projects like collective wind power generation. Disseminating success stories becomes vital for capturing financing, especially private investment, which can be challenging to complement with public aid.
- Many countries face challenges related to civic and participatory culture in energy citizenship**. Building on local traditional forms of organization is seen as crucial. Supporting intermediaries, such as associative movements for cooperatives, becomes essential.** These intermediaries not only educate citizens but also empower them, fostering a culture of active citizenship. Addressing the lack of civic and participatory culture is imperative for successful energy citizenship initiatives in Spain.
- To overcome financial barriers, there's a need for **flexible financing models**. These models should accommodate the diverse needs of energy citizenship projects. Tailoring financial

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support to different project scales and structures can enhance the overall viability and success of these initiatives. Beyond public subsidies and loans, there is a need **to develop alternative revenue streams for energy communities.**

- **Community Led Local Development** (CLLD) is an alternative financial planning tool from the EU that could be used to foster energy citizenship, another example that could be used are **Energy Efficiency Obligation Schemes.**
- **Good practice:** The Netherlands has implemented a development fund for energy cooperatives in certain provinces. This fund provides loans for project initiatives, creating a unique financial model where repayment is contingent on project success. This approach supports energy cooperatives, offering financial support for project leaders and enabling them to undertake activities vital for project development.
- There is a need for **adequate transposition of EU directives that enable the establishment of energy communities** (Renewable Energy Communities and Citizen Energy Communities). Moreover, the **risk of businesses hijacking the energy community model** or purely commercial actors trying to present themselves as energy communities needs to be addressed.
- **Facilitating mini or micro grids.** This involves creating a supportive regulatory framework for smaller-scale, community-led energy projects. By addressing the barriers to grid connection and ensuring fair remuneration for surplus energy.
- **There is a need to align financing and support programs from different government departments and eliminate silos to create a more cohesive and supportive environment for energy communities**. Addressing this lack of coherence involves streamlining communication and coordination between different entities involved in energy-related programs.
- Many community organisations face **considerable bureaucratic challenges** when getting approval for projects, navigating several organisations and programs. Streamlining these processes and shifting the bureaucratic responsibility to government entities can alleviate the challenges faced by community initiatives. Against this background, the transposition of the recast EU Renewable Energy Directive (2018/2001) mandates the introduction of a contact points to facilitate permitting processes. The Irish introduction of a **"single point of contact"** could be seen as a good practice[3].

[3] See for example, the single point of contact set up by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland.

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- **Importance of improving exchange and networking between cooperative organisations,** that have long traditions for example in Galicia (Spain) and Ireland. Strengthening connections between these organisations can facilitate knowledge sharing, collaboration, and collective learning.
- **Good practice:** Requirements for local ownership of renewable energy generation projects have proven to be a useful instrument in the Netherlands. The Dutch climate act advises that 50% of local energy ownership is targeted by 2030, allowing municipalities to enforce this as a formal requirement. This stipulation ensures that the community benefits from renewable energy projects, preventing the capture of revenues by commercial entities. Energy cooperatives, in particular, benefit from this requirement, as private developers often turn to them to meet the local ownership criteria.
- **Good practice:** Energy communities that focus on multiple value creation. This entails integrating sustainability issues and community restoration alongside energy-related initiatives. By strategically collaborating with other actors and rewarding those who contribute to multiple values, the economic case for such initiatives is enhanced. This holistic approach recognizes the interconnected nature of sustainability issues and promotes a more comprehensive impact.
- **There is a need for improved dialogues between energy initiatives and municipalities**. Policies may not always align with the needs of these initiatives, and grant programs can change rapidly, presenting challenges. Encouraging ongoing dialogues and ensuring policy stability are crucial for effective municipal support.
- **Energy communities require support to create viable business plans without overly relying on public subsidies and grants.** To do so there is a need for capacity-building within the cooperatives.

2.6. Agency type 5: In social movements

Recommendations that emerged from the workshops to support energy citizenship practiced in social movements included:

- **Civil disobedience**, exemplified by movements like Extinction Rebellion in Belgium, **has the potential to exert political pressure and influence policies across various levels of governance.** This strategy creates opportunities for **organisations to show how the demands of such movements could be translated into concrete actions.** In that way ideology-oriented and pragmatic forms of energy citizenship can complement each other.
- **Protect the right to association and freedom of speech.** In Hungary, individuals with strong political views, especially those aligned with green parties, may feel the need to conceal their affiliations when engaging in civic tasks. The fear of retribution underscores the challenges of maintaining political openness while participating in civic activities.

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- **Provide spaces where the demands of citizens and social movements can be heard.** Initiating more participatory processes at both municipal and social movement levels is essential.
- In Galicia, Spain, there is strong opposition against wind energy that highlights the importance of a just transition. While not opposed to against wind energy per se, the opposition seeks a **fair deployment of renewables that considers the environmental impacts and benefits at the local level**. **Good practice:** Renewables with the Territory: a shared vision, the project puts emphasis on a shared vision that involves multisectoral dialogues, synergies with economic activities, and guidelines for future areas of renewable energy deployment. Public opinion and the equitable distribution of benefits are central to this approach.

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Annex 1. Feedback Report from the EU Knowledge Exchange Workshop

Workshop agenda and list of participants

Date and time: 10 March 2023, 10:00-12:00 CET
Place: Board Room, Brussels Press Club, Rue Froissart 95, 1000 Bruxelles
Format: Closed-door roundtable
Organiser: Jacques Delors Institute

Agenda

From 9:45	Arrival of participants: Welcome, coffee and tea
10:00-10:05	Introduction to the project and presentation of the session's objectives
10:05-10:10	Presentation of theme 1: Enabling energy citizenship in energy supply and demand - State of play and preliminary policy recommendations
10:10-11:00	Theme 1: Roundtable discussion
11:00-11:10	Presentation of theme 2: Governing the European energy transition - what roles for citizens? State of play and preliminary recommendations
11:10-11:55	Theme 2: Roundtable discussion
11:55-12:00	Closing up and what happens next in the process?
12:00-13:00	Networking lunch

Participants

1.	Antonia Proka	Energy Transition Expert, REScoop
2.	Brooke Flanagan	Head of Climate Neutrality, Eurocities
3.	Claire Roumet	EU Policy and Strategic Partnerships, Energy Cities
4.	Cosimo Tansini	Policy Officer for Renewable Energy, EEB
5.	Gaëtane Ricard-Nihoul	Joint Secretariat for the Conference on the Future of Europe, European Commission
6.	Kieran Pradeep	Climate and Energy Justice Campaigner, Friends of the Earth Europe, Right to Energy Coalition
7.	Maria Koomen	Leader for the Open Governance Network for Europe

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8.	Marine Cornelis	Expert on Human and Social Aspects of Energy and Climate Transitions, Next Energy Consumer
9.	Namita Kambli	Senior Researcher, E3G
10.	Nives Della Valle	Joint Research Centre, European Commission
11.	Seda Orhan	Renewable Energy Campaign Coordinator, CAN Europe
12.	Camille Defard	Head of the Energy Centre at the Jacques Delors Institute and Research Fellow in European energy policy
13.	Karin Thalberg	Researcher, European energy policy at the Jacques Delors Institute

Key take-aways from the workshop

The workshop introduced the work conducted within EnergyPROSPECTS and was centred around two large themes of discussion: The themes were introduced by a state of play and preliminary policy recommendations: 1) *Enabling energy citizenship in energy supply and demand through social-economic inclusion;* and *2) Governing the European energy transition: what roles for citizens?* All types of citizenship were touched upon (see figure below), as well as transversal challenges that have bearing for all types. Types 1, 2, and 4 were primarily discussed under the first theme, whereas types 3 and 5 were discussed under the second theme.

Enabling energy citizenship in energy supply and demand through social-economic inclusion

Transversal

- "We often hear that citizens do not have the time or energy to be involved, especially socio-economically disadvantaged groups, but all evidence suggests otherwise. We need to highlight that their participation is not enabled, they are not given the kind of support needed to be involved."
    - What types of support is needed for socio-economic inclusion, for citizens to be able to (re)appropriate and take part in the transition?
- It is important to place equal emphasis on both energy supply and demand. So far, for ENCI, supply has a larger role within EU policy and legislation (e.g., renewable energy communities and citizen energy communities). What is needed in terms of legislation, responsibilities for different actors and types of support when it comes to the demand-side?
- In relation to the energy price crisis (2021-2022), there is a need to review the EU's competences (from market-action towards taxation) to be able to solve the structural issues of the energy market. There was a strong individualisation of responsibilities in the wake of the energy price crisis, and there is instead a need for structural interventions (ban on

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disconnections, minimum energy rights, state-aid, ring-fencing, and targeting of interventions).

- While competencies for social policy remain at the national level, there have been great progress at the EU-level in terms of social measures to counterbalance negative impacts of the energy transition and social funding, namely with the Social Climate Fund.
- There is a need to acknowledge that citizen involvement in the transition involves costs, in terms of technical assistance, in terms of funding, to rebalance the possibility to be involved, to renovate your home, to change your mobility patterns, you actually need collective action and more targeted, appropriate funding, taking into consideration the existing inequalities.
- Energy citizenship, as a more holistic approach to citizen participation in the energy transition, is a promising lens to ensure that policy makers can address problems efficiently, especially injustices that are present in the energy system.
- To empower people, the fundamental power imbalances in the energy system must be addressed. Interventions are needed to redistribute the power and the profits within the system (for example through windfall profits). Enabling measures on the citizen-side, to enable citizen participation, while important, has its limits. Without national and supranational state intervention, redistributive and rebalancing measures, the types of investments needed (such as for grid reinforcement and electrification) will neither be enough to reach our decarbonisation targets nor create a more equitable system.
- To empower people, the fundamental power imbalances in the energy system must be addressed. Interventions are needed to redistribute the power and the profits within the system (for example through windfall profits). Enabling measures on the citizen-side, to enable citizen participation, while important, has its limits. Without national and supranational state intervention, redistributive and rebalancing measures, the types of investments needed (such as for grid reinforcement and electrification) will neither be enough to reach our decarbonisation targets nor create a more equitable system.
- Energy citizenship and the rights and responsibilities of different actors in relation to each other links to the legitimacy of the energy transition: there is a need to go beyond distributive justice and consider recognitional justice, procedural justice and capabilities.
- Lack of assessment of societal interest in large-scale EU industrial plans, for example regarding hydrogen also has bearing on legitimacy.

Individual/within households

- Introduction of an ‘energy social security’, rethinking roles and responsibilities within the energy system to ensure that everyone has access to fulfil basic needs. In relation to that, on the other end, we need to rethink what luxury is.
    - Profiling of consumers according to needs and vulnerabilities.

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- Lack of data that accurately represent peoples' lived experiences (for example on disconnections) from MS at the EU-level.

Within organisations

- The responsibility of businesses to operate with responsible business models (for example, electricity contracts).
- Address the risk of businesses hijacking the energy community model or purely commercial actors trying to present themselves as energy communities. In Greece, for example, the implementation of RECs and CECs is directed towards businesses.
- Ensure sufficient staffing at the sub-national level to carry out the transition. Bottlenecks regarding for example energy renovation require the mobilisation and strengthening of sub-national governments/authorities.
- Upskilling and reskilling, a lack of competent technical workers to do solar panel instalments and energy renovations, another way for citizens to engage in the energy transition.

In citizen-based organisations and/or in constellations with different types of actors

- Examples from the energy prices crisis have shown that energy communities can provide support to the extended community, and their potential role in alleviating energy poverty, community-building and further mobilisation within other domains. However, there is a risk of over-burdening energy communities when structural issues like energy poverty lie within the state's responsibility. There needs to be a fair balance when it comes to their respective responsibilities.
- Access to the grid for energy communities remains a central obstacle. Asymmetry of information is the underlying problem. Especially in certain MS, large energy companies enjoy disproportionate advantages vis à vis the DSOs compared to community projects when it comes to the development of the grid.
- By enabling the direct participation in the energy system of the most vulnerable (for example through energy communities), we can empower people to themselves address the injustices they face through their direct participation. To do this, the legislation and processes regarding energy communities must be simplified and accompanied by adequate support measures.
- Provisions on renewable energy projects as 'overriding public interest' and granting derogations from environmental impact assessments is a concern, as the term is not clearly defined, and this could be an in for large businesses to circumvent citizen consultations.
- There are communities that mobilise for energy renovation, but there is a lack of information, finance, and infrastructure, as well as legal barriers for people to collectively engage, for example at the neighbourhood level.

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- Important to work with and support sub-national governments/authorities to lead and take part in the renovation wave.

Governing the European energy transition: what roles for citizens?

Transversal

- There is a need to create spaces for experimentation to be able to improve and transform the current system. One example is local storage solutions (relevant for individual/ households and citizen-based organisations and/or in constellations with different types of actors). Here, the commitment of DSOs is crucial.

Individual/within households

- The digitalisation of the energy system complicates things further and there is a lack of transparency for consumers on who is responsible for what. There is a need to recognise and strengthen already existing tools, such as the Energy Ombudsman/Mediator, for example by a parliamentary nomination of the National Ombudsman and democratic discussions on how the tool can be best used.

Within organisations

- Lack of transparency of energy system actors, such as DSOs; what they do, the finance they receive and how they use the money and lack of accountability in decision-making. Could a space of dialogue be opened up? That could decrease the democratic deficit within the energy sector.

In the public sphere

- Citizen assemblies/dialogues: energy and climate are the only fields where there is specific research linking decision-making and citizen participation.[4] While such exercises are a recent phenomenon at the national and pan-European level, there was an instant association with climate and energy issues.
- The 'deliberative wave' ties to the fatigue of representative democracy and the questioning of larger structures of democratic governance.

[4] See for example: https://knoca.eu/

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- The constant flows of information, fake news, and the creation of social media bubbles creates a need for qualitative deliberative spaces at every level of government, with an ethical environment, where a diversity of people and opinions are represented.
- At the pan-European level, the conference on the future of Europe[5] was an unprecedented event, but its scope was too large (three weekends to cover broad topics) and follow-up has been lacking, making accountability an issue. Additionally, the European institutions did not manage to agree on how follow-up would be assured. Therefore, the new generation of citizen assemblies that have been organised at the EU-level have been targeting very specific issues (three weekends on the same topic: food waste, virtual world, and learning mobility)[6]. The European Commission is currently testing different ways of embedding citizen assemblies in its legislative processes, in different types of legislative proposals and in different parts of the 'better regulation' process.
- The unit working on citizen dialogues (COMM C3) is pragmatically working with different units and the European Parliament, to see where citizen dialogues could fit into their processes. For the European Parliament it could be useful to organise a citizen assembly ahead of the European elections to attract more interest and attention.
- Trade-off: requires a lot of energy, time, and money.
- How could the EU climate pact ambassadors be integrated into these processes?
- There is scepticism from organised civil society regarding the impact of climate assemblies/dialogues. In order to truly rebuild trust, there is a need for structural reforms, for example reducing the power of fossil fuel lobbies and reviewing EU energy taxation legislation.
- Discussions need to be anchored locally, here citizen energy communities, local communities and municipalities can play a more impactful role than deliberative exercises.
- How could citizen assemblies be used within the framework of the energy system? TSOs, DSOs, regulators, and governments at different levels.

Five key questions to address regarding citizen assemblies

- Scope: concentrate on specific proposals, targeted topics, and a process designed to answer a specific question.
- Managing expectations: be clear on what will happen to the recommendations.
- Administrative capacity: who oversees follow-up? Who is accountable?

[5] Final report from the Conference on the Future of Europe.

[6] See: https://citizens.ec.europa.eu/index_en

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- Synergies with organised civil society: how can organised civil society have a dynamic and constructive relationship with an assembly?
- How are citizen assemblies connected to the wider public?

Good practices

- Ireland, linking citizen assemblies with referendums.
- Scotland climate assembly and a four-year plan to create a new structure for multi-stakeholder participation created by the government and civil society. The structure will monitor the recommendations of the climate assembly and the implementation of climate policies. This type of follow-up, including milestones, that ensures the participation and access to decision-making to a broad range of stakeholders is key in ensuring accountability in climate policy making.

Rebuilding trust

- Rebuilding trust is also a question of accountability, and ultimately about policy coherence. For example, during the energy price crisis the largest transfer of wealth was to fossil fuel companies, at the same time as citizens were asked to reduce temperatures at home.
- The small/local scale is especially relevant for vulnerable communities where there can be a lack of social capital and embeddedness in suboptimal conditions that inhibits participation. For the inclusion of vulnerable communities there is a need to (re)build trust. For that, empowering and supporting local NGOs and other types of intermediary actors is key as they can serve as bridges and catalysts for the participation of vulnerable communities/groups. By starting from the very individual scale with a tangible example, for example the electricity bill, discussions can expand.

Good practice

- An NGO in Naples working to rebuild trust of a local community to be able to create an energy community to empower them to actively take part in the energy transition and alleviate energy poverty.

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Annex 2. Feedback reports from the National Knowledge Exchange Workshops

Belgium

Workshop agenda and list participants

Date and time: 19 October 2023, 13:30-16:00 CET
Place: Brussels, Belgium
Format: Closed-door roundtable and small group breakouts

Agenda

From 13:30	Arrival of participants
14:00-14:15	Introduction of the project and presentation of the session's objectives
14:15-14:45	**Discussion round 1:** Are various forms of energy citizenship adding upor are they promoting specific concerns of limited groups of citizens?
14:45-15:15	**Discussion round 2:** Is Belgium providing fertile ground for energy citizenship through its various policies on prosumerism, energy poverty and energy literacy?
15:15-15:45	**Discussion round 3:** Are we underestimating the societal sources of disengagement and disempowerment that keep much citizenship switched off?
15:45-16:00	Closing

Participants

1.	Raf Pauly	BRAL (Brussels citizen action collective)
2.	Michel Huart	ULB Energy Efficiency Mission
3.	Benjamin Wayens	Université Libre de Bruxelles – Brussels Studies Institute
4.	Samuel Lietaer	Federal Ministry of Health,Food chain safety and Environment
5.	Justine Soete	Federal Ministry of Health,Food chain safety and Environment
6.	Malgorzata Matowska	Think-E
7.	Bonno Pel	Université Libre de Bruxelles
8.	Jönne Huhnt	Universität Weimar

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Outcomes of the workshop

Introduction: Energy citizenship in Belgium – under which conditions?

Energy Citizenship is becoming an all-present concern with the social pressures of high energy prices, a growing focus on security of energy supply and the looming climate crisis. The energy transition is no longer a matter for pioneers and frontrunners, it has become everyone's business. In this context we have explored how various energy consumers across Europe are developing energy 'citizenship': It takes shape through membership of energy cooperatives, energy-conscious organisations, awareness-raising and civil disobedience, and notably through policies that bring energy citizenship within reach for the less well-positioned. *Are these various forms of energy citizenship adding up, or are they promoting specific concerns of limited groups of citizens? Is Belgium providing fertile ground for energy citizenship through its various policies on renewable energy prosumerism, energy poverty and energy literacy? Or are we underestimating the societal sources of disengagement, disempowerment that keep much citizenship 'switched off'?*

To answer these questions and help us develop policy recommendations that can harness energy citizenship in the Belgian energy transition, we have invited six experts, practitioners, and activists for an open exchange in a roundtable format. The session aimed to discuss preliminary project findings on energy citizenship contexts and to generate ideas for policy recommendation.

Each participant teamed up with a partner to discuss each question and write thoughts or conclusions to each point on post-its. Subsequently, the whole group discussed the questions together.

We divided the session into three rounds. The first round had the topic *"ENCI – all towards same goals?"* After showing the bigger question *"Are the various forms of energy citizenship in Belgium adding up or are they promoting specific concerns of limited groups of citizens?"*, we presented four different examples of ENCI: ENCI: Non-violent civil disobedience for decisive climate action, ENCI: Bringing home renovation within reach for energy-poor households, Cultivating ENCI within the organisation and ENCI through cooperative investment in hydroelectricity, respectively. Then we asked the participants to discuss three sub-questions: *Which of the 4 examples do you find the most, and least, promising example? In which respects are they promising? Which societal concerns, which groups of citizens, are they good for? In which respects are they not so promising? Which societal concerns, which groups of citizens, are they not so good for?*

The second round had the topic "Belgium – fertile ground for ENCI?" with the overall question *"Is Belgium providing fertile ground for energy citizenship through its various policies on*

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renewable energy prosumerism, energy poverty and energy literacy?". Here we presented a picture of the different factors of the PESTEL analysis: Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal. Then we asked the participants to discuss the questions *"Which of the 6 PESTEL factors do you consider most decisive in promoting ENCI in Belgium? And which one seems the least decisive?"* and *"What kind of policies are in place/should be in place to create more favourable conditions for ENCI in Belgium?"*

Lastly, we proposed our third topic "ENCI – negative trends" with the main question being *"Are we underestimating the societal sources of disengagement, disempowerment that keep much citizenship 'switched off'?"* To approach this question a picture of a surfer walking down the beach was shown. This image should give background to the discussion questions: *"What is keeping people/organizations 'switched off'? Due to which societal trends/circumstances are many people in Belgium having 'cold feet'?"* and *"Thanks to which societal trends/circumstances might many people in Belgium be getting empowered to enter the water?"*

Key observations from the Belgian workshop

Observation 1: Diverse but mutually reinforcing ENCI efforts

The discussion around the four Belgian cases brought out how these examples represent distal and proximate efforts to further ENCI. On the one hand, there are distal efforts, exemplified by XR (Extinction Rebellion). Even if not bringing about much in terms of concrete projects, participants appreciated how such efforts create a fertile political climate for certain more specific proximate efforts, for certain more concrete ENCI projects. Civil disobedience was considered to be important as it holds the potential to challenge and even influence international politics. Through creating political pressure, it can create awareness and, in turn, open up opportunities for organisations promoting specific forms of ENCI or specific investments in ENCI. Meanwhile, the BBL home renovation campaign example was appreciated as a proximate effort, and especially as a collective undertaking joining actors from various institutional backgrounds. Undertaking ENCI on a massive scale, it demands that different actors collaborate – government, civil society, the home renovation industry, and the many intermediary organisations involved. The key policy consideration here is that pragmatic and ideology-oriented forms of ENCI may reinforce each other. The ideology-oriented ENCI can provide the policy narrative needed to legitimate certain ENCI-related policies, but in turn the narrative does need to become operational and tangible through policies and practices that allows citizens to practice pragmatic ENCI in their everyday lives.

Observation 2: Cooperatives as crucial promotion of counterhegemonic business models

The roundtable highlighted how ENCI somehow needs to have some transformative, counterhegemonic effects if it is to become meaningful and useful in the Belgian context. Energy

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cooperatives, as represented in the HOSE case study, were considered a very promising example of an ENCI initiative. The business/social innovation models of cooperatives challenge traditional capitalist consumption logics, as they rest on the premises of sharing and production for self-use. Such a break with the traditional economic framework may be necessary both locally and internationally, the discussion brought out. Reduction of our consumption patterns can occur only through a change in economic frameworks, it was considered. Moreover, active engagement in the production of one's own energy increases the awareness helps of individuals' energy consumption.

Observation 3: ENCI can be built on pre-existing micro-societies

A participant summarised it in a one-liner: Citizenship requires/presupposes a society in which it can be enacted. This implies two main ideas. Firstly, the ENCI must be embedded in a system that values and supports the individual's engagement. The individual energy citizen further needs to see a goal which is worth working towards and to know that their individual effort is meaningfully contributing to a better society. Secondly, it does not suffice to focus on the individual (citizenship) but rather the focus should be on the larger scale (society). Efforts to promote and develop ENCI should therefore target collective instead of individual engagement. In terms of policy, this observation underlines how the Belgian context is favourable for ENCI development. Through its extensive Third Sector it has a very rich institutional structure, with plenty of micro-societies.

Observation 4: Institutional fragmentation as a key barrier for ENCI in Belgium

A recurring theme was the institutional fragmentation in Belgium. Even if not necessarily disadvantageous for the emergence of local ENCI initiatives, participants underlined how it prevented ENCI action on a greater scale. The institutional barriers in the Belgium context hinder the successful development of a project, which in turn impedes economically viable investments. Bureaucratic hurdles lead to costly considerations of how and where certain adaptations have to be made to the business plans. And even when these hurdles are overcome, the cumbersome scaling still creates uncertainty about return of investments. In Belgium, the economic-financial consequences of ENCI remain nebulous – and this discourages actors from long term investments.

The discussion addressed the fragmentation of the Belgium energy market in particular. Some parts are state owned and some privately owned, to a considerable extent by foreign investors. The Belgian governance is fragmented, and this yields quite some financial-administrative-bureaucratic complexities. Throughout, participants pointed out how there's various places/organisations in which some quick wins can be made - middle-term or long-term projects remain very uncertain undertakings, however. Belgium offers a favourable cultural context, yet the administrative complexities prevent larger scale ENCI action. Efforts towards upscaling run

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into a ceiling, or a wall - of the 'institutional lasagna', as Belgians themselves call it often. Qua policy, this point indicates first of all that ENCI may be difficult to develop in similarly institutionally complex EU membership, and that EU-wide policies will need to take these differences into account. Another possible implication is that ENCI policies would require transversal, boundary-spanning action.

Observation 5: Digital obsession

The Belgium context provides favourable ground for technologically innovative energy system solutions. Roundtable participants indicated a certain fascination with technology, amongst the Belgian political and industrial elites. In terms of PESTEL analysis, much hope is placed on the capacity to develop favourable technical factors. However, this enchantment with technological solutions can create the illusion of a "technological fix" of climate change and related matters. This techno-optimism could turn into a barrier for ENCI, and the associated social-institutional innovations. In terms of policy, this observation calls for a broad innovation strategy approach for energy issues (socio-technical transitions, or transformative innovation policy). More specifically, digitalisation should be taken as an opportunity for ENCI-related digital social innovation, rather than as prolongation of techno-fix obsessions.

Observation 6: Lack of future perspective as a deep barrier to ENCI

The third discussion round on disengagement and disempowerment yielded an important about the deep barriers to ENCI that appear to exist in Belgium (and perhaps elsewhere too): The lack of a future project, i.e. the lack of a guiding future perspective. The discussion called attention to the lack of a commonly agreed upon framework, but also to the impoverished imaginaries of ENCI-related futures: Imaginaries of the future often amount to revivals of the past, but the past cannot be the future. We cannot continue in the way we did in the past, as these lifestyles and consumption patterns do not comply with the demands of a future society. There is a lack of a common future vision, and a certain nervousness about society's capacity to avoid the mistakes and unintended consequences of the past. This lack of a future perspective can create fundamental doubts amongst citizens. For policy, this observation is useful first of all as a 'reality check': Underneath all the subsidy programs, awareness-raising, activation, and empowerment, and beyond all the environmental, social, and financial benefits that can be ascribed to ENCI activities – *are the ENCI policies carried by sufficiently credible imaginaries of ENCI futures? Or are they accidentally falling into the trap of presenting futures that are de facto presenting the past?*

Observation 7: The importance of energy literacy and sense of agency

Belgium may be a favourable context for ENCI for the abundance of micro-societies (see observation 3) in which to develop it. Still there is quite widespread disengagement with ENCI in Belgium, and a key source of this appears to be a lack of education – in a very broad sense. This

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comprises energy literacy, and the lack of understanding of the causes and the solutions to the energy crisis. It also comprises a lack of awareness of available options, services, procedures – despite the existence of dedicated 'one-stop-shops' and empowerment programs that alleviate much of the energy literacy shortcomings. The discussion also addressed broader issues of disempowerment. In Belgium there also seems to be a certain disorientation or unawareness about how to get involved in ENCI activities. This also encompasses a lacking awareness of ones' own agency – the active role that one may have to play in energy matters, and the ways in which one could contribute. For policy, this underlines the importance of developing a diversified program of education - across age brackets and involving awareness-raising as well as dissemination of information.

Observation 8: ENCI and the continued relevance of the 'big players'

This last observation addresses the Belgian circumstance that it is surrounded by big countries, and that a lot of key sectors are dominated by transnational big corporations. Belgium is a rather small country, surrounded by influential European countries such as France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Germany and the Netherlands and Germany. This fact is aggravated by the earlier-discussed institutional fragmentation of Belgium. The discussion of this issue did not go into much detail, but the very notion of the 'big players' deserves consideration. ENCI is surrounded with a 'bottom-up' and 'small is beautiful' discourses, and it directs attention to the 'small players' – the citizens. In Belgium, but probably also in many other mid-sized or relatively small EU member states, all ENCI strategies should consider the stakes and positioning of the big players as well – who may not form part of the micro-societies (see earlier) in which ENCI tends to be developed.

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Bulgaria

Workshop agenda and list participants

Date and time: 12 September 2023, 10:00-13:00 EET
Place: Alexander Zhendov Str. 5, 113 Geo Milev, Sofia
Format: Closed-door roundtable
Organiser: Applied Research and Communications Fund

Agenda

From 09:45	Arrival of participants
10:00-10:10	Introduction of the project and the session's objectives
10:10-10:20	Introduction of the participants
10:20-10:30	What do we mean when we talk about energy citizenship? The European perspective
10:30-11:00	Energy citizenship in Bulgaria - discussion
11:00-11:15	Energy transition in Bulgaria: What are the citizens' roles?
11:15-12:15	Energy transition and citizens' participation - challenges, opportunities and good examples: discussion
12:15-12:20	Closing: What happens next?
12:20-13:00	Lunch

Participants[7]

1.	Marko Hajdinjak	Applied Research and Communications Fund
2.	Zoya Damianova	Applied Research and Communications Fund
3.	Myrto Ispyridou	Applied Research and Communications Fund
4.	Balin Balinov	Greenpeace

[7] The representatives of SOFENA confirmed their participation but were unable to attend due to last minute change of circumstances.

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5.	Alexander Stoyanov	Sofiaplan
6.	Ivona Grozeva	Sofiaplan
7.	Nadya Nikolova	SOFENA
8.	Zdravko Georgiev	SOFENA
9.	Teodora Stanisheva	Center for Energy Efficiency EnEffect

Outcomes of the workshop

The workshop focused on a discussion about the various aspects and levels of energy citizenship in Bulgaria, as well as its current and potential future applications. Energy citizenship was analysed through the lens of wide-reaching political, cultural, and economic questions that pertain to the country. As much as possible, the important differences between individual municipalities, as well as those between urban and rural areas, were also considered.

The participants outlined the key challenges that have proven impactful on the development of energy citizenship in all of its forms, and presented good practices on a local level that may be reproduced. The interventions of the participants are synthesized below in thematic order.

Energy Citizenship in Bulgaria

According to both the project data presented during the introductory session and the participants' contributions, energy citizenship in Bulgaria appears to be lagging in some respects. Energy cooperatives are not yet widespread, and citizen involvement in the transition process is practically lacking.

Nonetheless, the discussions provided additional insight into the steps being taken – both on a local and on a national level – to achieve the energy transition objectives set by the country and the European Union. Participants shared their views on the recent developments and their impact on energy transition; from its facilitation through legislative changes to its practical implementation through projects, citizens' initiatives, and actions undertaken by institutions and enterprises.

Challenges to Energy Transition and Citizen Participation

The legal/institutional framework

One of the most prominent challenges initially noted by participants was the lack of formalised national energy goals. Five consecutive general elections in the 2022-2023 period failed to produce a stable government and a series of caretaker governments appears to have impeded Bulgaria's progress in defining the energy transition and renewable energy objectives.

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Furthermore, the lack of political cohesion and consistency may have hindered citizens' capacity to remain informed about the legal regulation of their own participation in the process.

Several participants agreed that institutions do not prioritise or in some cases even deliberately neglect or avoid engaging with citizens. Citizens are often excluded from deliberations and decision-making processes, and awareness campaigns are not utilised appropriately. Thus, even a change in energy legislation is unlikely to encourage citizens to take initiative and increase their participation, if no other means of communicating information is established, and the institutions do not become more active and accommodating in their interactions with the citizens.

Various forms of energy citizenship are hindered by the fact that some fundamental terms are vaguely defined or even absent from legislative documents. For example, prosumerism is not legally recognised, which hinders the creation of energy communities and the exchange of renewable energy among citizens. Energy cooperatives are likewise not adequately addressed by the legal framework. It was noted in the discussions that Bulgaria's sole energy cooperative had to undergo a very long and cumbersome processes to assure its legitimisation.

Finally, participants highlighted the slow progress regarding the inclusion of energy poverty definition into Bulgaria's Energy Act. After many years of ignoring or postponing the issue, the definition was finally proposed and is currently in the parliamentary procedure, having obtained approval in the respective parliamentary commissions. The parliament is expected to vote and pass the amendment to the Energy Act in near future. The lack of official energy poverty definition has stalled the proliferation of energy citizenship on both an individual/household and a community level. It prevents individual citizens and communities from receiving the help and resources they may need, discourages people from participating in the energy transition process, and risks subjecting a portion of the population to prolonged energy poverty and excluding them from the transition.

Access to information

A recurring concern among participants was citizens' inability to easily access information on energy transition, RES usage, and energy citizenship. Citizens are not adequately encouraged to exchange ideas, concerns and demands. They have very rarely the opportunity to address experts in the field of energy.

An example offered by a participant: the regulations on using solar panels for individual energy consumption have changed repeatedly. Citizens cannot be expected to constantly seek out information and discover the latest legislative changes on their own. State institutions and other stakeholders in the energy sector have to be much more active and persistent in their communication with citizens.

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As Bulgaria expects to complete the liberalisation of the energy markets in the upcoming years (by 2026), distrust and uncertainty are prominent among the general public due to the proliferation of misinformation and the lack of accessible information materials. Some participants noted that national and local media, but also state and municipal institutions, should be doing much more to produce and distribute accurate and relevant information, rather than allowing for the public's fears to dominate the discussion.

Potential lack of specialisation: the necessity of experts' advice and suggestions

Participants noted in a number of different contexts that even in instances of good practices, energy citizenship and the energy transition process are hindered by the fact that experts or specialists, which should work with stakeholders and offer applicable and sustainable suggestions, have limited capacity or lack the interest to engage with citizens. This deprives citizens and communities of resources, support and access to information, reducing their role in the energy transition to a very passive one. It moreover prevents energy objectives – whether national, municipal, or at a community level – from being adequately realized. Such issues may be less pronounced in 3-4 of Bulgaria's largest cities (Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna and Burgas), but are particularly prominent in small towns and rural areas, which further stalls the development of energy citizenship and creates an even greater divide between urban and suburban/rural parts of the country.

Another prominent obstacle is the limited expert capacity in the energy sector. There are simply not enough qualified specialists available. For example, the requirement for zero-emission buildings from 2028 onward necessitates timely planning and considerable expert involvement, which is currently deficient.

The public's outlook: adequate access to good examples?

Participants argued that a key challenge to the development of energy citizenship is the lack of good examples set by state institutions, which citizens could follow and replicate. Good examples might come from other countries, which are more advanced in the uptake of RES and the active participation of citizens, but here again we return to the question of who will present such information in a way that is interesting and engaging for the wider society.

Some participants expressed concerns that the energy transition process and the potential proliferation of energy citizenship in Bulgaria might be "tainted" by some "traditional" Bulgarian features. Participation of citizens might be inconsistent and opportunistic. There is a risk that a pronounced dependence on funding programmes and grants might develop. There might even be unwanted consequences for the environment (for example, disposing of old solar panels on illicit landfills or other places in the nature).

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Good Examples and Opportunities

Utilisation of local media

A good way to address the aforementioned issues pertaining to misinformation or lack of accessible information can be the involvement of local media, especially traditional sources such as television, radio and newspapers. This would present a significant opportunity both for the education of the public and for the proliferation of awareness campaigns about energy liberalisation and the transition process. The involvement of local media was noted to not only be a potential opportunity, but a "tried-and-tested" good example. As part of the Horizon 2020 funded project "**ECO2 (Energy Conscious Consumers)**" an online platform providing information and training to citizens was created. The target was to attract 1000 platform users in Bulgaria. The promotion of the platform through social media and websites bore little result. However, when the platform was advertised through local media based in towns such as Blagoevgrad and Sandanski (south-eastern Bulgaria), the campaign attracted over 800 users within a month.

The importance of collaboration between local media and the respective municipalities where these media are located was also assessed. The regional plans for energy transition, opportunities for discussions and consultations, and potential tools and instruments for the involvement of people in energy citizenship are all questions that may be most successfully presented if communicated by local information sources.

Opportunities for citizen involvement

The exclusion of citizens from the decision-making processes and the failure to take the public's needs, opinions and concerns into account was regarded as a primary challenge during the discussion. However, participants did mention several examples of citizen participation and highlighted their positive results. It would be very important to utilise such examples and make the citizen engagement a regular and expected part of decision-making processes on a regional and national level.

The **Conference on the Future of Europe** was brought forward and presented in more detail as an example of large-scale citizen involvement. The citizens' panel was said to have generated a vast array of suggestions on topics such as the future of European research initiatives (e.g. Horizon 2020) and amendments to policies and legislative documents.

This position was fortified through examples of localised citizens' panels that have taken place within various projects. It was suggested that citizens brought forth exceedingly creative ideas and suggestions.

While citizen involvement was recognised as a good example, participants highlighted that citizens are seldom provided with the meaningful opportunity to contribute, and their

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knowledge and ideas remain an untapped potential in Bulgaria. For now, citizen involvement remains an opportunity that could potentially be impactful in the future.

The establishment of a one-stop shop for energy services in Sofia was said to be a good practice for the inclusion of citizens in the energy transition. The Centre for Energy Efficiency was officially opened in May 2023. It is one of three in the country, the other two being located in Gabrovo and Burgas. The Centre provides consultations on renovations and retrofitting and on the installation of photovoltaic systems, among others.

While the concept of a one-stop shop for energy services is a good practice that may yield significant results in the future, its successful execution and maintenance require several elements that are currently missing, such as greater promotion and specialised employees or partners. The establishment of these centres is thus more likely to be considered an opportunity for the future rather than an existing good practice.

Energy communities

While energy communities and cooperatives are still not commonplace in Bulgaria due to the aforementioned challenges, important steps have been taken to promote and facilitate them. One such example is Greenpeace's guide on the creation of energy communities, published on RESCoop. This manual is written in Bulgarian, does not employ specialised terminology, contains examples from various European countries, and is free for download, making it readily accessible to the public. Moreover, it contains information on issues that are specific to the country, such as how to combat energy poverty.

Participants suggested that the excess energy produced by the energy communities and sold to the grid could be used as a measure for alleviating energy poverty. An additional idea in this respect was the creation of a fund for the renovation of buildings.

A participant brought up the example of an informal energy community located in a provincial Bulgarian town, in which neighbouring houses with photovoltaic panels shared a single battery, effectively trading energy between themselves.

Sofia's water supplier has established and is utilising a methane station for the production of energy for use in its premises. While the initial plans to supply nearby neighbourhoods with the energy produced from the tank proved unrealisable, the company's initiative remains an important good practice.

Energy cooperatives

Izgrei.BG, Bulgaria's first energy cooperative and a member of the European Federation of Renewable Energy Cooperatives, has had a wide-ranging impact on energy awareness and the

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transition process. Its website is a good source of practical information about what an energy community is, the main principles that energy communities follow, and the benefits of energy communities. The importance of Izgrei.BG for the local community in which it is located, goes beyond the production of photovoltaic energy and helping the community deal with frequent power shortages in this remote rural area. The area also has long-standing problems with water supply, as it is dependent on electric pumps. In the past, a power shortage meant that the water supply was cut off. This problem has now been considerably alleviated thanks to the solar panels.

Izgrei.BG is the first and only example of an energy cooperative in Bulgaria. However, its establishment and legitimisation have paved the way for future developments in this area. Its foundation has contributed to the creation of a more well-defined framework for energy cooperatives.

Shared mobility

On the topic of good business practices that facilitate the energy transition, the participants highlighted shared mobility. Opportunities for shared mobility opportunities growing rapidly in Bulgaria's larger cities and have expanded to include a well-connected network of both electric vehicles and various forms of micro-mobility suited for urban areas.

Opportunities such as electric car sharing (e.g., the SPARK Company) in Sofia and Plovdiv have been widely regarded as an important step in embracing green mobility in urban areas. Participants regarded the SPARK Company as a business, whose model is both beneficial and replicable in other areas.

Other green mobility opportunities such as e-scooters were also mentioned by participants. While the dangers caused by the lack of their regulation and their absence from the traffic code were seen as a cause for concern, the benefits of their widespread use in urban areas, especially in the Bulgarian capital Sofia, were recognised.

The establishment of a docking station for shared bicycles in Boyana, a Sofia neighbourhood located on the lower slopes of the Vitosha Mountain, a popular recreational area, is intended to reduce the use of cars on Vitosha Mountain.

Financing and the involvement of banks

The role of banks in the energy transition may be proving increasingly important, as some have begun providing support for photovoltaic installations in the form of loans with lower interest rates. Although already deemed to be a good practice, this first step could evolve into an important opportunity for the future: participants commented on the importance of flexibility,

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which would include raising and lowering instalments based on the price of the energy produced during a given year.

Institutional practices

The Energy Efficiency and Renewable Sources Fund was set to be transformed into the National Decarbonisation Fund, which would prioritise addressing barriers to the improvement of energy efficiency, as well as coordinating projects and programmes centred around energy efficiency. The restructuring of the Fund, although not yet realised, is conducted with the intent of meeting the country's long-term energy objectives.

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France

Workshop agenda and list of participants

Date and time: 13 June 2023, 14:00-16:00 CET
Place: Paris and online
Format: Closed-door roundtable
Organiser: Jacques Delors Institute

Agenda

From 13.45	Arrival of participants
14:00-14:05	Introduction of the project and presentation of the session's objectives
14:05-14:15	What do we mean when we talk about energy citizenship? A European perspective
14:15-14:35	Roundtable 1: Introductions of speakers/participants, questions and first remarks
14:35-14:45	The French energy transition: What roles for citizens?
14:45-15:55	Roundtable 2: Discussion (First interventions 5 minutes each)
15:55-16:00	Closing up and what happens next?

Participants

1.	Alexandra Lafont-Kaufmann	Head of Regional Networks, in charge of Associative Life at Énergie Partagée
2.	Alexandre Pleurdeau	Sustainable Development Project Director, Department of Maine-et-Loire
3.	Andreas Rüdinger	Coordinator, Energy Transition France at IDDRI
4.	Céline Jullien	Co-chair of the French Energy Regulatory Commission's foresight group on consumer confidence in energy services
5.	Ophélie Bretaudeau	Head of participative projects - Concertation and citizen participation at Missions Publiques
6.	Philippe Bourguignon	Chairman of the Railcoop Board of Directors
7.	Camille Defard	Head of the Energy Centre at the Jacques Delors Institute and Research Fellow in European energy policy
8.	Karin Thalberg	Researcher, European energy policy at the Jacques Delors Institute
9.	Phuc-Vihn Nguyen	Researcher, French and European energy policy at the Jacques Delors Institute

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Outcomes of the workshop

During the roundtable, the discussion was primarily centred around the results of the French PESTEL analysis, recommendations, and key points either of a transversal nature for energy citizenship generally or specifically focusing on the different spheres and constellations of actors where energy citizenship can be practised. During the French workshop, four out of five spheres/constellations were discussed.

Below, the participants' interventions have been synthesised to key points regarding opportunities, barriers, core messages and good practices along the following themes: transversal; individual/within households; within organisations; in the public sphere; and in citizen-based organisations and/or in constellations with different types of actors. For each theme, keywords have been chosen and are presented at the top to provide an overview.

Transversal

Trust/confidence vs. mistrust/defiance, ideological divide, polarisation/violence, responsibility/responsibilisation

- The wide approach to energy citizenship taken in the project is seen as something positive, it leads the discussion towards energy as a common good and expands the circle of interested people from those in energy communities to everyone, including the private and public sector. It underlines that the energy transition is a question not only for 'connoisseurs' but for public debate.
- Citizenship, especially from the angle of building trust and confidence for energy services, for climate/energy policies, and actors with key roles in the transition, is a core concern of the energy transition.
    - At the opposite end of trust is defiance/mistrust that is often rooted in fear. The attributes and consequences of mistrust are critical and must be identified at the societal level.
    - Ideological divide and increasing polarisation on energy, climate, and environmental issues in French society. Especially visible in the media landscape.
    - The bigger the divide in society (that goes beyond questions of energy and climate), provides less growing ground for cohesion and something that resembles citizenship and democracy.
- It is a structural and structuring question for the years to come if we are to succeed in decarbonising our societies in a well-planned and orderly manner. We need to touch upon questions of engagement, of wonder/marvel/enchantment, things that inspire/intrigue people and make them want to try.

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- There is a need for a clear strategy and clear objectives that have bearing in people's everyday lives: this is what society will look like; with quantitative targets that are tangible and have meaning for people.
- The governance axis of the transition is not identified as a strategic concern by the national government (e.g., in the ongoing work with ecological planning, and the revision of the SNCB and PPE). The goal of 1000 new locally governed renewable energy projects (owned and governed by a majority of local citizens and a local authority, initiated together with a private developer) that was launched by the previous environmental minister was not mentioned in the discussions on the legislative proposal on the acceleration of renewable energy deployment it was not mentioned, and has not been followed up.
- Many discussions that are aligned with the project's take on energy citizenship are still happening in parallel with what is going on at the political level. Counter example: more and more actors, especially at different local levels, are mobilising and the state is slowly opening up to local actors (in particular in relation to the new law on the acceleration of renewable energy). However, they are clearly on the sideline.
- Pay attention to: Age divide/generational divide; and urban/rural divide and the impact of the development of new energy infrastructure. Balance impacts and efforts of rural and urban populations.

Individual level/within households

Confidence, beyond price, re-appropriation of a collective energy future

- There is a need to go beyond the citizen as a user and consumer of energy services and to go beyond the question of price as the key factor that matters. The question of confidence is key. Beyond the rational response to price signals, there is an emotional aspect.
- One part of the solution will be the (re)appropriation of the construction of a future with a collective objective.

Within organisations

Roles of regulators, electricity providers and grid operators, private sector, investors

- It is crucial to not fall into the trap of individual and collective responsibility that is out of reach for people, there are key players within the energy system (e.g., regulators, electricity providers and grid operators) that have a legal responsibility for the transition. Enabling 'energy citizenship' will not necessarily mean making people take responsibility for their choices.
    - A risk of these actors to not seize the opportunity to communicate as we see a growing maturity of public involvement in energy issues.
- Lack of funding for local authorities.

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- Lack of funding for associations.
- The private sector will play a key role when it comes to investments in the transition. How can private investments be aligned with citizens' needs?
- Pay attention to the companies of tomorrow, such as energy renovation companies etc.

In the public sphere

Dialogue, deliberation, collective narratives, citizens responding to recommendations

Return of experience from Missions Publics

- Related to the violent polarisation in French society, in projects and exercises based on dialogue and deliberation, the debate becomes calmer. Participative, deliberative exercises are a way to support citizenship. Such exercises can, for example, be key to create consensus around objectives, looking ahead together and coming up with a shared, collective narrative of the problem at hand. Deliberation is a means of dialogue that allows us to move together towards a more reasoned and collective discourse.
    - Moving from the blockage of "how do I do it on my own" to create a narrative of how we move forward together?
- By creating a framework for dialogue, a challenge becomes something we build together, that comes alive. The French National Commission for Public Debate is promoting public debate as a means to do this, but bodies like the Département could also make use of it. **But who will take the lead when it comes to energy?**
- Output from climate/energy topics across scales show that there are common aspirations towards slowing down and sentiments that technology will not solve everything. Focus rather lies on the local scale: the ability to act, individually and collectively.

Good practice: Fair Energy Transition for all project on fuel poverty

The project targeted urban and rural citizens, across age categories, living under different types of housing arrangements (e.g., social housing and house owners) to discuss France's 2030, 2040 and 2050 climate and energy objectives and the participants' perceived barriers to be able to contribute to those targets as a first stage of the exercise. Citizens' consultations/panels were held across France.

- As a second step, these outcomes were discussed with experts coming from the private and public sector as well as NGOs/foundations. While the experts initially came with their own agenda, throughout the exercise they had to centre back to the initial contribution of the citizens which eventually led to a merging of their agendas and a sense of common responsibility to respond to the concerns of the citizens. The experts then had to come up with recommendations on how to overcome these barriers.

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- In the final session, citizen ambassadors (first stage of the exercise) came to listen to the experts present their recommendations and challenge them. Interesting outcomes were that the experts did not have an answer to the question of how to decentralise and furthermore found it difficult to position their recommendations in relation to French regulations.
- This type of feedback loop (citizens-experts-citizens) is a methodology for practising energy citizenship. The initial contributors did not only come as contributors in the beginning but had an impact by being able to challenge the recommendations in the end.

In citizen-based organisations and/or in constellations with different types of actors

New forms of governance, public intermediation, cooperation between public, private and citizen-based organisations, appropriation/ownership of the transition, local ecosystems

- The key role of local players and ecosystems (see the example of Maine-et-Loire below) in enabling a locally driven energy transition.

Return of experiences Railcoop (the first Rail Cooperative) with a concrete goal to relaunch a passenger line Bordeaux-Lyon by 2024

- Mismatch between citizens and different levels of government: more support from citizens (14000 shareholders, 6000 voters, 8 million euros invested by citizens), big cities (metropoles), local levels (communes, communités des communes et departments'), the region and the state provide no support for the initiative.
- A 'real' citizens' project? Thwarted by political powers? Bank loans and public subsidies not adapted for these types of projects.
- In the field of transport these types of local players, such as semi-public companies (SEM, see example from Maine-et-Loire below) do not exist, citizen involvement is therefore much more complicated.

Citizens' renewable energy projects, return of experiences from Energié Partagée

- When talking about renewable energy projects: It is important to be clear which actors we are talking about, and how to take their respective capacities and needs into account?
- In France the financial support measures for renewable energy are insufficient to support the pace of development required to fulfil EU-objectives.
- Simplification of administrative procedures for renewable energy projects in general and support measures adapted to citizen-led projects particularly.
- In the new law on the acceleration of renewable energy, shared values in terms of economic remuneration for residents have been put forward, but beyond the economic benefits, renewable energy projects can have a number of impacts, especially social ones. Firstly, if local actors carry out the works of a project with local shareholders, the profits will be

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reinvested into the local economy. Secondly, local citizens' renewable energy projects create intergenerational encounters, create links and cooperation in the area, enabling people to learn about renewable energy and the professions involved in the energy transition. In several of their projects, Energie Partagée sees people joining due to redundancy schemes in other industries to learn a new profession, i.e., citizens' projects as conversion centres for energy transition jobs. Skills in general, but also at the local level, are needed for the transition.

    - The link to local authorities is particularly important as it creates legitimacy and credibility of the projects in the area. Local authorities can also provide support when it comes to funding and the provision of land.
- Citizens' renewable energy projects are also in a way an experimentation with local democracy.

Maine-et-Loire (département), cooperation across public/private and citizen-based organisations

- History of cooperation within the energy domain: departmental SEM (semi-public company/societé d'économie mixte) for renewable energy production where the main shareholders are the département (32%), the dépertement's energy union (30%) and the Maine-et-Loire EPCI (13%) together with private players, such as banks. This cooperation has opened up a space to develop the local energy transition, enabling a tool for renewable energy projects under public control (83 projects to date). It aims to break even and abandons projects if environmental or social consequences are considered to be too high.
- The départemental energy unions are a key intermediary player in the French context.
- The départemental level in France is under-utilised, but has the potential to be a key intermediary, to be the link between the communities, the local authorities, and the region (and by extension, the state).
- Some citizens' collectives are so "citizen-minded" that they want to exclude public players - how can we change this image?

Good practice - Charter Départemental

- Aims to reach out to public authorities and citizens' groups that are not yet involved in locally governed renewable energy projects, promote local appropriation of the energy transition by creating a framework for cooperation between citizens, the public and the

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private sectors based on shared values (EPCIs[8], municipalities, citizens' groups, and private developers).

- Signature on the 11th of April 2023: public actors (9 EPCIs, Départemental SEM, SEM local, energy union, Département); citizens' based organisations (11 citizen collectives, 1 association départemental for the emergence of collectives, Energie Partagée cooperative, Enercoop Pays de la Loire, RECIT the regional network for citizen energy); private actors (9 private developers).
- Financing: Primarily brings together the existing resources of the players (and some new ones).
- Limited resources of some players – but some players have lots of resources (e.g., EPCIs, SEMs).
- A new way for the Département to work with private players.
- Key roles for elected representatives with drive and ambition, continuity is also important (re-elected).
- Fundamental commitments/values of signatories:
    - Accelerate the deployment of renewable energies;
    - Involving citizens and public players in the ownership and governance of projects;
    - Maximise the local economic and social benefits of projects.
- Pooling skills and knowledge (complementarity);
    - Getting to know each other and listening to each other's interests;
    - Building on the local dynamic;
    - Inform, involve, and listen to all stakeholders (residents, elected representatives, economic players, associations, etc.).
- Objectives:
    - At the local level:
        - To provide a framework to facilitate cooperation between public and private players who share common values;
        - Tools to defend local interests in the projects (economic benefits, quality of projects).

[8] Public establishments for inter-municipal cooperation (EPCI) are administrative structures that enable several municipalities to exercise joint powers. They are subject to common rules that are uniform and comparable to those of local authorities. EPCIs include urban communities, conurbation communities, communities of communes, new conurbation syndicates, communes syndicates and mixed syndicates.

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- At the departmental level:
  - Share best practices of the implementation of locally governed RES projects between actors in the department;
  - Respond to the needs of everyone, according to the local realities on the ground;
  - Promote and raise awareness of existing players and local initiatives in the department.

- What role for the département?
  - Management:
    - To monitor and guide the deployment of the charter by setting up and leading a steering committee (with representatives of all types of players represented in the charter);
    - Produce an annual report.
  - Individual support:
    - Facilitating the establishment of partnerships;
    - Support signatories over the long term;
    - Intervene in conflict situations (listening and mediation).
  - Collective support:
    - Offer group work sessions (e.g. experience sharing, tools, etc.);
    - Organise an annual departmental event.
- Resources for the signatories through the charter:
  - Local authorities:
    - 1st advisory service on wind and photovoltaic projects: SIEML[9] via the "Générateur" scheme;
    - Support for the development of projects (SEM Alter Energies or Mauges Energies);
    - “PollinisER" financial scheme to encourage the emergence of citizens' collectives: SIEML
  - ***Citizens’ based organisations*** (support by RECIT network, the regional support network animated by Energie Partagée, with financial support from ADEME and the region):
    - Support for project developers;

[9] Syndicat intercommunal d'énergies de Maine-et-Loire.

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        - Exchanges between project leaders;
        - Emergence of new groups.
    - Private actors:
        - Municipalities, EPCIs and citizen-based organisations are the gateways to the projects;
        - The “Générateur" scheme to facilitate links with local authorities.

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Germany

Workshop agenda and list participants

Date and time: 1 September 2023, 9:00-13:00 CET
Place: Online
Format: Participative Workshop (mixing WP4 and WP6 workshops)
Organiser: Center Technology and Society/ Zentrum Technik und Gesellschaft, TU Berlin

Agenda

9:00-11:00	Strategies to strengthen civic engagement for a transformative energy transition (energy citizenship)
11:00-11:20	Break
11:20-12:45	The influence of national politics: Framework conditions for strengthening civic engagement for a transformative energy transition
12:45-13:00	Conclusion and next steps

Participants

1.	Dorothee Arenhövel	German Environment Agency (*Umweltbundesamt*)
2.	Henning Herbst	Consultant Team Energy and Building, Consumer Advice Centre (*Referent Team Energie und Bauen, Verbraucherzentrale*)
3.	Kathrin Anger	Advisor at Adelphi in the Sustainable Consumption team
4.	Kerstin Lopau	Community management neighbourhood circle, solar self-construction, network and public relations at SoLocal Energy
5.	Lars-Arvid Brischke	Institute for Energy and Environmental Research Heidelberg (*Institut für Energie- und Umweltforschung – IFEU - Heidelberg*)
6.	Robert Brandt	Managing Director for the Renewable Energy Agency in Berlin (*Geschäftsführer für die Agentur Erneuerbare Energien AEE*)
7.	Beate Petersen	Beate Petersen is Chairperson of the Supervisory Board of Bergische BürgerEnergie-Genossenschaft e.G. and BürgerEnergieGenossen-schaft eG. Beate Petersen is also spokesperson for the Council for Citizen Energy in the supervisory board *Bundnis Bürgerenergie*.

Outcomes of the workshop

Overview of the workshop outputs

During the workshop, the discussion was primarily centred around strategies for strengthening civic engagement for the energy transition and the influence of national politics as well as the existing framework conditions which foster or hinder civic engagement. A special focus has also been put on the recent legal improvements, notably the Renewable energy Act from 2023.

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During the roundtable, the discussion was primarily centred around the recommendations and key points either of a transversal nature for energy citizenship in general or specifically focusing on the different spheres and constellations of actors where energy citizenship can be practised (see figure below).

Below, the participants' comments have been synthesised to key points regarding opportunities, barriers, core messages and good practices along the following actor groups who carry out energy citizenship: transversal; individual/within households; within organisations; in the public sphere; and in citizen-based organisations and/or in constellations of different types of actors. For each theme, keywords have been chosen and are presented at the top to provide an overview.

Transversal				
• Power relations and asymmetries • Lack of intermediation spaces • Societal transformation project • Sector coupling • Energy market conditions and electricity infrastructure • CO2 pricing and energy flat rate • "We are all part of this energy transition"				
Individual within households	**Within organisations**	**In the public sphere**	**In citizen-based or hybrid organisations**	**In social movements**
• Prosumers participation in the energy system • Smart meter rollout and literacy • Tenant electricity model	• Needs for information and support • Hybrid forms (professional and volunteers) • Alternative financing models • Peer learning	• Positive communication on energy transition • Hardened conflict lines	• Funding bureaucracy • promote what already exists in terms of engagement Climate protection management • Law on energy communities	• Not evocated during the workshop

Transversal

Power relations and asymmetries, lack of intermediary spaces, societal transformation project, sector coupling, energy market conditions and electricity infrastructure, CO2 pricing and energy flat rate, overall context.

- Participants experienced the workshop as a "snapshot of where the energy transition is today" and opportunity to learn about other projects and initiatives. While there are ups and

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downs, the overall impression is that “we’re getting things moving”.

- The participants addressed **issues of power** and hegemony: Participants showed a relative consensus on the fact that if more and more people work in the renewable energy sector and get involved themselves, this has far-reaching social consequences, which also involves power relations. There is for instance a power component involved when big corporations have a lot of money to greenwash their lack of engagement and many municipalities and public utilities have received tax money from corporations. Meanwhile volunteer initiatives are struggling. There is also the fact that the solar panels used in Europe are mainly produced in China, where human rights for workers (e.g. from the Uighur people) are neglected and which results in dependency from China. As strongly stated by the representative of Solocal energy association, linking such issues with a more general view on power relation within the energy system is crucial: “This is not my version of energy transition.” Solocal Energy´s representative argued for a more transformative approach that gives more place to emergent grassroots actors: “There is need for a transformation, while big players who professionally promote the energy transition are needed, perspectives from below are also important and they can become big players as well eventually.” The questions of what kind of concepts for the energy transition are dominant and what kind of community work is wanted, need to be asked while paying attention to the work which is already being done by volunteers.
- Connected to this question of power, some participants raised the issue of a **lack of intermediary spaces.** The representative of the German Environment Agency underlined that “Perhaps spaces are needed in order to enter into this dialogue, and I see the local level as crucial. Because this is where the actors know each other best and are perhaps best able to look each other in the eye and talk honestly. And, of course, the question is to what extent the municipality wants and can place responsibility in the hands of the citizens. What community work is it actually about that is already heavily supported by citizens? And what concepts are needed?”. The representative of Bundnis Bürgerenergie agreed, adding that “initiatives are not in contact with each other enough and sometimes, there is no need for new strategies but for more understanding”. Similarly, joint support structures to face difficulties (such as the corona-crisis) could be very beneficial.
- Most of the participants also agreed on the necessity of a better understanding of the energy transition as an overarching **transformation project**. For the representative from Bündnis Bürgerenergie, “alternatives already exist, such as a solidary citizen ticket.” In her view, to be able to conceive a transformation project, it has to be based, for instance, on intensive networking with initiatives that already exist in specific cities and beyond. To achieve transformation, she suggests that it is needed to "We just have to be much, much braver and really question everything, and then it will work ".
- There was agreement amongst the participants that the energy transition means that there is more **sector coupling**, completely different areas have to be addressed in parallel, such as

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mobility, land use and multiple other sustainability issues. This is perceived as a quite unknown challenge and requires more administrative departments to be involved at once. It was stated, that - also due to a lack of resources and staff -current administrative structures are organised in such a way that thinking outside the box is almost impossible. Some participants stressed that formats as living labs provide a good framework for people with different background to start a joint discourse which is almost not possible in current settings.

- Consensual was also the statement that there is a "fundamental design error" with the energy sector which should be changed/eliminated and that is that higher consumption is linked to profit maximisation. Communities need approaches that are oriented on other criteria than profit, meaning predominantly sustainability. The participants agreed that the **design of the electricity market** has to be questioned, maybe even fundamentally changed. For the representative of the Consumer advice centre, the one-sided promotion of renewables should be replaced by a two-sided one: When prices rise, profits need to be skimmed off, so that they can be regulated, and high prices are not transferred to consumers. At the same time, he sees the change of electricity market as highly challenging, as the representative of Adelphi comments: "I don't see that the electricity market design is being completely revised and thrown over. This energy-only market. This is not the way it is set out in EU legislation and the federal government is not pursuing it either." The representative of the Berlin Renewable energy agency underlined that the **electricity infrastructure** needs to correspond to the energy transition: What is produced locally should be consumed locally but there also has to be infrastructure in place for offshore energy and its use in other parts of the country (mainly the industrialised South Germany). The IFEU representative concluded by stating that "both have to be developed, the decentralised supply and the expansion of the interconnected grids, they belong together in a complementary way."
- The **CO2 price** was also considered by most of the participants as a potential good instrument, that should be pushed forward instead of supporting everyone with subsidies, regardless of their income, as expressed by the Berlin Renewable energy agency representative: "[the CO2 price] needs to be increased, and this should be done radically, but of course we have to be careful that we take society with us at this point. The only thing I always didn't understand is why they didn't just do this continuously." The representative of the Consumer advice Centre approved, and put the emphasis on the **energy flat rate**, an instrument whose importance was acknowledged by all participants: "The energy flat rate becomes an important instrument (agreement by all), which could possibly be financed by CO2 price".
- *All in the same boat...* As pointed out by the representative from Bündnis Bürgerenergie: **"We are all part of this energy transition"** and this should be part of the communication. The BBEn representative adds that the entire potential needs to be used so accomplish the energy

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transition: Solar energy gained from private PV panels on roofs should not only be used for one's own needs but could also cover needs of others, for instance via energy sharing. In her view, the energy transition "has something to do with freedom, I can do something myself, I can shape something myself."

Individual level/within households

Prosumers participation in the energy system, Building Energy Act, smart meter rollout and literacy, tenant electricity model.

- The IFEU representative stresses that there is a lot of potential on the demand side to enhance energy literacy and involvement in the energy system. He argued that, when people build solar panels on their roofs, they are also made aware of energy consumption in general. The public supply with renewables is strengthened when **prosumers can participate in the system** and contribute by feeding in their generated electricity. This should broadens their perspective and make them part of the energy transition instead of encouraging them to consider their home as a "little castle" where they generate their own energy and can consume as much energy as possible.
- The planed **Building Energy Act** (Gebäude-Energie-Gesetz - GEG) is seen by all participants as a great contribution to the energy transition by progressively avoiding fossil fuel for heating buildings and more generally, as underlined by the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research in Heidelberg (IFEU) representative who stated "that the GEG becomes a great opportunity for homeowners to make their houses fit for the future and not to preserve them in their old condition." The representative of the Consumer advice centre also pointed out that "there is a lot of **financial support**, and if one takes advantage of the subsidies, there are good opportunities for making one's home CO2-neutral".
- For the representative of the Adelphi, the **smart meter rollout** also raises several issues: "Just because you now have a smart meter and can track your consumption better, doesn't mean that you're necessarily saving electricity. [...] But what you can do is to adapt your behaviour to the times when renewables are being produced or supply electricity. […] Very few people will start to get in touch with this technology themselves; that will be done via apps and other tools. That already exists, it's a market where companies can offer services." However, in the view of the Consumer Advice Centre representative, it also has to be transparent, comprehensible and overall designed properly to have an impact and "it is unclear how the task of **providing information** will be delegated. While there are consumer advice centres that provide energy-saving tips, the information needed is becoming increasingly complex with the current trend where most single-family homes have a PV system, an e-charging station, a heat pump. This is a **complex system that needs coordination**."
- All the participants agreed that the **tenant electricity** model works well for private

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households and can promote energy cooperatives and communities at the same time. Similarly, there was a consensus on the importance of energy sharing, which will be a core focus for the coming months, as expressed by the representative of the Consumer advice centre: “I have energy sharing on the agenda for the next six months. Community building supply. There is still a lot to be adopted.”

Within organisations

Information and support needs, professionalisation and hybrid form (professional and volunteers), alternative financing models and peer learning.

- According to the representative from Solocal energy “the war in Ukraine motivated many people to build solar systems on their roofs and doing it by themselves”, but currently there is no designated organisation they can turn to when they need the necessary **information and support** for doing that, initiatives cannot afford to advise as many groups as is currently needed on a voluntary basis. She adds that there are two or three initiatives that do this full-time and others that do it on a voluntary basis and none of them has resources to do more. Do-it-yourself construction initiatives have the potential to become economic actors that start with voluntary commitment but become economically feasible with time, but in the first phase there are not a lot of earnings so they would profit of any kind of support. For Solocal Energy, they would be able to provide the necessary support for self-building in time, but there is a support gap which could be overcome through funded coaching, counselling and networking centres. The IFEU representative approves, underlining that “no large sums of money are needed for knowledge-transfer, it must remain a mixture of voluntary and subsidised advice.”
- The Solocal energy representative follows up by pointing out the core difference between reform and transformation regarding the **professionalisation.** For her, the transformative aspect about self-construction groups is that people can do the installation of their solar panels themselves and are involved in the whole process. There is a certain amount of technical expertise, certificates and general professionalisation required for building solar plants, but **hybrid forms** between professional and volunteer are required to enable people to become involved in the installation of their solar panels without being professionals or having to hire somebody to do it for them. If a craftsman comes and does it for one, one is less involved.
- The Adelphi representative noticed that **alternative financing models** such as crowdfunding that entail direct monetary and social participation have great potential and are the opposite of “not in my backyard” attitudes. She adds that those kinds of fundings could fruitfully benefit from more **peer learning**, especially at the European level, asking how initiatives in other countries work and establishing and promoting networks between initiatives can be of great benefit.

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In the public sphere

Positive communication on energy transition, hardened conflict lines.

- No real consensus appeared regarding the public sphere agency. On the one side, the representative of the BBEn insisted on the need for a **positive communication on energy transition,** underlining that "The work has already been done, it already exists, we only have to actually use it. There has to be a continuity there. And this should be communicated more widely, maybe we citizen energy cooperatives or the NGOs should start pushing this through our social media channels. […] And we should aim not at optimizing our own consumption, but by filling up all the roofs and share the energy with our neighbours […] Yes, there is a lot to do. But I also see that we are on a positive path."
- On the other side, the representative of the Berlin renewable energy agency pointed out the current **hardened conflict lines** in a heated discourse when it comes to the energy transition: activists are sticking themselves onto the streets while others drive around with car stickers against the energy transition. There are people who want to produce renewable energy who are getting threatened because of it. For him, it is vital to highlight that there are many people who are getting involved moving things forward and show that "it can be done". In his view, "we slept for a long time with the last governments and that's why it was so shocking for people, because a lot came at once". In this context, he considers that "soft things are so important in the current heated discourse. Can we find ways of financing them or do we have to regulate them differently? Perceptions have changed, people involved in climate protection are sectarian, tackling this is a big challenge."

In citizen-based organisations and/or in constellations with different types of actors

Funding bureaucracy, rethinking the promotion of engagement, climate protection management, law on energy communities

- All the participants agreed on the fact that the process of acquiring **funding** is lengthy and complicated. As underlined by the representative of the Berlin renewable energy agency, initiatives are limited in their capacities because so much time is spent writing applications for funding. Often, initiatives need multiple sponsors, so that they do not have time for their actual tasks. Efforts in capacity building in general have decreased or changed their focus, which means that initiatives can act less.
- For the German environment agency representative, rethinking the promotion of engagement is required. Indeed, "the focus on monetary support always brings with it various difficulties, including this question of professionalization. Because you focus more and more on the current funding criteria and therefore run the risk of losing your original motive in your commitment. Because you have to bend your motives depending on which funding is

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currently being advertised". Solving the funding question is therefore a critical issue to preserve the freedom of engagement. For her, this would entail **promoting and valuing what is already there in terms of engagement** and the dynamics that made it happen. The representative of BBEn agreed and states that "there is a need to talk to each other at eye level. Sometimes, there is no need for yet another sustainability strategy but working with and trusting in what is already done". The representative of the Berlin energy agency follows up, pointing out that "What I'm really interested in is ensuring that what already exists is supported in the long term. We just have the situation where […] institutions always have to come up with new ideas because only innovations are encouraged. And the projects run for a certain period of time, for two or three years. It works great up until then. […] and then, the project is over. Then it will no longer be supported. […] there is a flash in the pan that then goes out again."

- Regarding the legal framework, all participants agreed on the key importance of the **climate protection management**. The extended application of climate protection management is still under discussion, whilst, according to the BBEn representative, "four years should have been enough". Difficulties with regard to its development are pointed out by the representative of the Berlin Renewable energy agency, "we need more climate protection management, but it is financed by the Länder, not the federal government. The federal government does a lot, as do individual federal states, but not every federal state is equally equipped." The new **law on energy communities** is seen by most of the participant as a move in a good direction, which opens up the possibility of energy sharing in a near future. However, the new definition of Citizen Energy Company transposing the elements of the REC definition from the Renewable Energy Directive is not consensual, as expressed by the representative of BBEn: "I was actually shocked about the definition. Because I actually thought: Oh dear, that makes it even more complicated. As I said, I also come from the early days of EEG, where it was so simple. Where you could just do it. And, of course, I saw that with the tenders there could be cases of abuse. So, in that sense, there are two hearts beating in my chest. Yes, on the one hand it is perhaps necessary, but on the other hand, it complicates things a bit for me".

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Hungary

Workshop agenda and list participants

Date and time: 20 September 2023, 10:00-13:00 CET
Place: MEMO (Mesterek és Módszertanok Háza), Wesselényi u. 73, 1077 Budapest, Hungary
Format: Closed-door roundtable
Organiser: GreenDependent Institute

Agenda

From 9.45	Arrival of participants
10:00-10:10	Introduction of the project and presentation of the session's objectives
10:10-10:30	What do we mean when we talk about energy citizenship? A European perspective
10:30-11:00	Roundtable 1: Introductions of speakers/participants, questions and first remarks
11.00-11-15	The Hungarian energy transition: What roles for citizens? Inspiring European and Hungarian examples from the database
11:15-11:30	Coffee break
11:30-12:30	Roundtable 2: Discussion – main enablers and barrier of ENCI in Hungary
12:30-13:00	Summary and what happens next
13:0-14:00	Lunch (vegan & vegetarian)

Participants

1.	Alexandra Fekete-Varga	Sustainability officer at Municipality of Kispest, 19th District of Budapest
2.	Ágnes Szalkai-Lőrincz	Community Energy Programme Coordinator of Magyar Természetvédők Szövetsége (Friends of the Earth Hungary)
3.	Ákos Éger	President of Magyar Természetvédők Szövetsége (Friends of the Earth Hungary)
4.	Bence Kovács	Energy Efficiency Programme Coordinator of Magyar Természetvédők Szövetsége (Friends of the Earth Hungary) ***– Case in Hungary***
5.	Dorottya Lénárt	Climate protection officer at Municipality of Budapest
6.	Fanni Sáfián-Farkas	Project Manager at Szolidáris Gazdaság Központ // Transzformátor Közösségi Energia Központ (Centre of Solidarity Economy // Transformator Community Energy Centre) ***– Case in Hungary***
7.	Gabriella Zagyva	Programme Coordinator at Municipality of Alsómocsolád ***– Case in***

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		Hungary
8.	Ilona Illésné Szécsi	Programme Coordinator at Magyar Energiahatékonysági Intézet (Hungarian Energy Efficiency Institute) ***– Case in Hungary***
9.	István Ferenczi	City Councilor of Kispest, 19th District of Budapest
10.	Krisztina Olasz	Project Coordinator at Energiaklub (Energy Club)
11.	László Karas	Head of Cabinet of City of Szentendre
12.	Luca Papp	Energy Project Coordinator at WWF Hungary
13.	Tamás Németh	Municipal Project Manager at Arrabona EGTC
14.	Zita Gellér	Strategic Referent of Sustainability and National Coordinator of EEA/EIONET and UNEP 10YFP programmes at the Ministry of Energy
15.	Zsuzsanna Hojtsy-Keresztény	Founder of Gödi ÖkoKlub Association ***– Case in Hungary***
16.	Anita Szőllőssy	Project Manager of EnergiaKözösségek, GreenDependent Institute (GDI) ***– Case in Hungary***
17.	Edina Mihály	Project Manager of TreeDependent Programme, GreenDependent Institute (GDI) ***– Case in Hungary***
18.	Edina Vadovics	Research Director, GreenDependent Institute (GDI)
19.	Kristóf Vadovics	Executive Director, GreenDependent Institute (GDI)

Outcomes of the workshop

A very good mix of 15 external participants accepted our invitation and gathered to share their views on Energy Citizenship. There were participants from policy makers (ministry, municipalities), companies, NGOs and also academia, but we also invited some individual and collective case representatives from Hungary (see attendance list above).

After a brief introductory presentation on the project results so far, highlighting some interesting elements of the Hungarian PESTEL, the participants started discussing key enablers and barriers for ENCI in Hungary in two groups.

During the discussions, all five spheres have been covered, as well as transversal topics overarching the five spheres of energy citizenship. A general impression is that the participating experts and stakeholders are very concerned about the state of affairs in Hungary in relation to ENCI.

Keywords have been selected and listed to aid the analysis of the participants' feedback at the top of each sphere.

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Transversal

Lack of trust, smart technologies, cooperation, scarcity in supporting/enabling measures and circumstances, 'twelve step programme', lack of proper education about ENCI, lack of interest and awareness among general public, lack of political will, need to strengthen municipal level autonomy, information overdose

- The lack of trust is a cultural characteristic in Hungary, which can be seen in personal matters (e.g. decision-making in housing communities) and social issues as well.
- Smart technologies and devices can support conscious and energy-saving behaviour.
- Possibility of cooperation between actors with different (complementary) consumption curves.
- We all need to initiate a 'twelve step programme' to overcome our addiction to overconsumption and the growth paradigm – 'Anonymous over-consumers'.
- No real educational programmes have been initiated by government about ENCI, what exist is only due to a few NGOs' activities.
- General public is not aware of energy/climate related problems, they do not understand why they should deal with such issues. In many cases they think these issues are only forced upon us by the European Commission.
- Lack of political will from the governing political elite in relation to sustainable energy, climate change and environmental issues in general[10]
- General public is overdosed by all sorts of information (online, printed, media, etc.) thus it is difficult to reach their thresholds with ENCI related topics.
- Lack of improvement of the energy grid by the government in the past decades so solar and wind energy developments are restricted.

[10] Since 2010, there is no independent, separate ministry for environmental or climate related issues, all related tasks and topics are dispersed within several other ministries (e.g. Agriculture, Technology, Energy). A new Ministry of Energy was set up at the end of 2022, but its main focus is on providing secure and sufficient amount of energy (any type, including fossil and nuclear).

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Individual level/within households

Lack of professionals, lack of financial incentives, bad energy pricing system, poorly constructed government incentives, visible and invisible good practices, energy certificates, insufficiency of the energy grid, low motivational and self-esteem level of individuals, gender inequalities, autonomy

- Lack of (good) professionals who are able to carry out energy efficiency improvements.
- Lack of well-constructed financial incentives (appropriate scale, non-refundable, supports people in need) / poorly constructed solar panel subsidies in the past: did not encourage calculation of return on investment, did not support people in need.
- Utility cost reduction[11] does not encourage conscious energy consumption. Solar panels are therefore only worth using for those who are not energy conscious. Gross accounting should be introduced instead of balance accounting to the energy produced by solar panels encourages local consumption and energy saving.
- Visible good practices spread easily ("solar panel envy"), invisible ones (e.g., heat pumps, insulation) spread slower.
- Energy sharing in apartment buildings will be regulated from next spring (2024).
- The new (household) energy certificate is better and more transparent (which must be done in the case of real estate sales) and includes less – unnecessary – information and a complete renovation plan to aid those who are not very knowledgeable about energy related issues.
- Individuals are depressed and feel alone in general, and it is also true when they try to do something in connection to become an energy citizen, they feel many obstacles.
- Women tend to be more sensitive towards sustainability issues, they are in many cases the initiators or ENCI-activities, but at the same time due to their overburdened tasks at home they do not have enough energy and time to maintain their activities.
- Many households initiate energy improvement on their homes (insulation, solar panels, etc.) Autonomously (on their own) and do not wait for funding sources, but a large part of society cannot be expected to do so.

[11] The term 'utility cost reduction' is a buzzword introduced into Hungarian public discourse by the FIDESZ government since 2013. In practice, it meant a transition from free-market pricing to regulated prices on the consumer side in the sector of energy and utility providers. In 2022, due to rising energy prices, the utility cost reduction was partially restricted.

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Within organisations

Counter-interested energy producers and network operator companies, ESG investing, RenoHUB, employer-employee cooperations, carsharing, micro-mobility

- It is not in the interest of energy producers and network operating companies for consumers to organize and become independent.
- ESG (environmental, social, and corporate governance) investing increases the commitment of banks to finance green projects.
- Renohub project[12] supports residents' consciousness.
- Cooperation between corporations and employees (e.g., company car fleet) helps create more trust and more possibilities.
- Car-sharing is popular and relatively cheap, but its accessibility is limited in the rural areas.
- Micro-mobility is cool, it has its own subculture, and it can be used to balance the production and consumption curves.

In the public sphere

No strong consumer advocacy, politicized issues, no consumer advocacy, EKR system (energy efficiency obligation system), green commitment of the government,

- Utility costs and public transport issues are political buzzwords, this makes it difficult to start a professional dialogue in these cases.
- Consumer advocacy organizations are absent during decision preparation - lack of a strong consumer representative organisation, monopolistic providers making decisions without social control.
- The energy efficiency obligation system is a policy obligation that seeks to achieve energy savings through energy retailers and service providers. It obliges the retailer companies to invest in green causes.
- The Hungarian government is greener in actions than in the political communication, their communication is opposed to climate change, but they still create a lot of opportunities (e.g., through tenders).
- Enshrining the energy community as a concept in law can promote professional discourse.

[12] The overall aim of the RenoHub project is to trigger an upscaling of energy retrofitting of Hungarian homes through the development of an integrated business model (RenoHUB) that is capable to substantially expand within and beyond the project lifecycle in an economically viable manner without involving additional public grant co-financing.

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In citizen-based organisations and/or in constellations with different types of actors

Important role of municipalities, lack of support for collective ENCI solutions, fear of co-operation and failure, more support for NGOs would be welcome, improvement of social skills, community building & development,

- If there is a good cooperation between local governments and residents, it can improve the ENCI cases (and vice versa, if the cooperation is bad, it can make developments harder).
- Mostly – if any – support is given to renewable development/investment that is directed at the household level and collective solutions are either blocked or hindered.
- People in general are afraid of co-operating with others[13], and in parallel there is a huge fear of failure and disappointment.
- General lack of social skills (how we communicate with others, how we resolve conflicts, etc.), these need to be improved to have a successful co-operation among collective ENCI participants.
- Community building is essential for ENCI to thrive, but it is difficult because of the history of the country.[14]

In social movements

Artificial separation of political views and civic duties, necessity to become institutionalized, need for more participatory processes

- If a person has strong political views (e.g., supports or is a member of a green party) he/she must hide his/her views when performing civic tasks otherwise retribution may be initiated.
- It becomes impossible to pursue civic activities after a while without becoming institutionalized to apply for grants or funds (e.g., forming an association or foundation), which puts very heavy organisational and financial burden on movements/groups of people fighting for a cause. Social movements that are not formally organised are not taken very seriously by Hungarian authorities.
- More participatory processes need to be initiated both at municipal level and at social movement level.

[13] The Hungarian term 'cooperative' has a very negative connotation due to the forceful collectivisation process of the Communists state in the 1950s, people do not trust collective solutions very much, which is a great barrier to energy co-operatives and collective solutions in general.

[14] In the communist era (1948-1990) organic communities were attacked and destroyed, the general trust in other people mostly disappeared due to the state run informer/snitching system, and only state run or approved communities could properly exist, the rest had to go underground.

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Input regarding and examples of promising business and social innovation models

Community-based (housing)

- Ecoteams/energy neigbourhoods programmes to involve households.
- Demonstration projects for refurbishing households using local materials and local professionals.
- Hungarian Living Village Network, eco villages.
- RenoHub.
- Micro-mobility and other mobility sharing systems.

Community-based (REC/CEC)

- Some municipalities have initiated or would like to start REC projects (e.g., local swimming pool getting energy from solar panels installed on the roofs of neighbouring multi-apartment buildings and using the produced excess energy during the day, which households do not need. Unfortunately, these types of projects are very expensive and small municipalities do not have the financial means.
- First REC projects in Hungary (by Friends of the Earth Hungary).

Organisation-based

- 'Small community programme' – to aid local community development initiatives by experts and academics, including social action research.
- Crowd funding is great, and we need to share more good examples of it.
- Co-operatives should be revived again as 'new' business model in Hungary.
- ESG investing.
- IMBY instead of NIMBY investments.

Publicly-led

- Participatory municipal budget creation – local residents directly involved in municipal budget planning for the town.
- Community Led Local Development (CLLD) as an alternative financial planning tool.
- Energy Efficiency Obligation Scheme - "Paying for sins" by investing in green things.

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Ireland

Workshop agenda and list participants

Date and time: 21 September 2023, 10:00-13:00
Place: Dublin
Format: Roundtable
Organiser: University of Galway

Agenda

10:00 – 10:20	Introduction to the roundtable and EnergyPROSPECTS project & Round of introductions
10:20 – 10:35	Input 1: What do we mean by energy citizenship? A European outlook
10:35 – 11:15	Group work: What roles for citizens in the Irish energy transition?
11:15 – 11:35	Break
11:35 – 12:00	Presentation of group work and plenary discussion
12:00 – 12:10	Input 2: Barriers and enablers of energy citizenship in Ireland
12:10 – 12:50	Plenary discussion: 2030 scenarios and policy recommendations for energy citizenship in Ireland
12:50 – 13:00	Conclusion of roundtable and outlook

Participants

1.	Alexandra Revez	University College Cork
2.	Benjamin Schmid	University of Galway
3.	Brian Barrett	Galway City Council
4.	Frances Fahy	University of Galway
5.	Gregg Allen	Community Power
6.	John Doody	Energy Institute
7.	Máirtín Ó Méalóid	Energy Communities Tipperary Cooperative
8.	Megan Kuster	Ringsend Irishtown Sustainable Energy Community
9.	Michael Arthurs	Kilkenny County Council Environment Section
10.	Philip Cheasty	Enterprise Ireland
11.	Ruth Buggie	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)
12.	Ruth OReilly	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)

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13.	Susan Richardson	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)
14.	Tim Strasser	Maastricht University

Outcomes of the workshop

The round table discussion was structured around two sets of questions. The first set of questions was addressed in small groups and summarised in a plenary discussion. These questions revolved around what role citizens can and should play in the Irish energy transition. The second set of questions addressed the drivers and barriers as well as policy recommendations for energy citizenship and its forms in Ireland. These questions were discussed directly in the plenary.

First plenary discussion

- What do you consider to be energy citizenship in the Irish context?
- How do you assess the way how citizens are currently involved in the Irish energy transition? What are good/best practices?
- In what areas do you see potential for more civic involvement in the context of the Irish energy transition? Why would that be desirable?

Second plenary discussion

- Are there any other barriers or enablers for energy citizenship in Ireland that have not been mentioned yet? Other contextual specificities?
- How do you expect (different forms of) energy citizenship in Ireland to develop between now and 2030 under the current policy framework?
- What other scenarios for this development until 2030 can you imagine and what changes in the policy framework (at which governmental level) would be required for this?

Below, the participants' interventions have been synthesised to key points regarding opportunities, barriers, core messages and good practices along the following themes: transversal; individual/within households; in the public sphere; and in citizen-based organisations and/or in constellations with different types of actors. For each theme, keywords have been chosen and are presented at the top to provide an overview.

Transversal

Scope of energy citizenship, meaning of ownership, overburdening the term, alienating parts of society, tailoring messaging to different groups, missing institutional anchoring of energy citizenship in public policy and institutions

Directionality and scope of energy citizenship

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There were several points addressing the wider meaning of energy citizenship or elements associated with the concept.

- Energy citizenship can potentially be a positive or negative. Energy citizens could be pro a decarbonized energy system or against it. And it could be very difficult to separate energy out, especially as it should be a whole systems approach. Related to that the question was raised how energy citizenship fits in with climate citizenship and sustainability. Even if a person is pro nuclear and anti-fracking, the person could be an energy citizen in both of those positions but may expect very different outcomes.
- Fundamentally, energy citizenship should be participatory, must have an ability to influence.

Energy citizenship and ownership

Two points were raised about the idea of ownership associated with energy citizenship.

- First, it was pointed out that more important than legal ownership is a sense of ownership.
- Second, it was emphasised that ownership should not be limited to being concerned with ownership over x amount of production capacities or grid connections but rather a sense of ownership of the collective energy system – that the collective energy system works for the citizens. Ownership in this sense also means having difficult conversations (for instance about where people can or cannot build their houses).

Avoiding overburdening energy citizenship and threats of alienating parts of society

There was a caution against overusing the term "energy citizenship" and applying it in all contexts. It was pointed out that applying it might also alienate parts of society, especially already disadvantaged groups.

- “I think sometimes when we talk about prosumers and investors and things like that it's a reminder for those that aren't in that space of a lower status energy citizenship. […] It can lead to sort of ideas of the elitism, which is a problem […]. If we kept the term more associated with collective aspects of energy citizenship or where there’s more opportunities available, it would be less problematic.”
- “Instead of reducing the gap, we are growing the gap now between the middle-class energy transitioner – that class of energy citizen – and then the people who are in the space, like the energy poor and those who are being left behind in the process – and they are being left behind. And we are actually widening the gap by creating this sort of elitist thing now of the two Tesla-cars in the driveway and the PV panels on the roof.”

It was pointed out that energy citizenship (in Ireland) is largely spoken about in terms of energy decentralisation and micro-grid infrastructure. But that there is also a large energy grid infrastructure already in place and energy citizenship is important in those contexts as well.

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Linking energy citizenship exclusively to projects associated with ownership over energy infrastructure misses that ownership does not replace participation, engagement, voice, empowerment and enablement, which are also elements of energy citizenship. It will likely not be the case in Ireland that there will be only a decentralised energy system where everybody just owns their own energy infrastructure. Rather, there is also a need for large energy infrastructure and energy citizenship matters there as well in forms of good participation, good policy decision-making.

Tailoring communication around "energy citizenship"

Linked to the previous points is also how the term "energy citizenship" is communicated, given that it actually is a term used in Irish policy discourse.

- There is a lack of general awareness around the idea of energy citizenship in Ireland and the actual term itself might come across as quite technical to many.
- It is important to tailor the message to the kind of cohort that is attempted to be engaged. With a diverse agenda for the energy transition, it would be advisable to break it down – not everything is relevant or digestible for all. Otherwise, this risk alienating people from engagement.
- Implementation of decarbonising zones was mentioned as a potential space that might be more tangible and visible to people to get in touch with energy citizenship and best practice examples.

Diversity of agendas and missing institutional anchoring of energy citizenship in public policy and institutions.

A number of points were raised how government institutions with diverse agendas support energy citizenship, or rather how a lack of anchoring of energy citizenship and spaces for citizen involvement in energy as part of in government institutions poses barriers to the development of energy citizenship.

- Energy citizenship is linked to a diversity of agendas, including decarbonisation, decentralisation of energy, and shifting demand. It was pointed out that there can be a lack of a pathway for engagement for citizens to understand the evaluation process or the different actors involved, linked to these different agendas.
- It was noted that when approaching the government on issues as citizen/community, much depends on having the right personal contact / being lucky at reaching the right person, while a more institutionalised approach is missing. For instance, there is no designated position in the relevant governmental department for energy communities / citizens (apart from SEAI as government agency).

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- There is currently no policy driver, policy champion. Citizen involvement in energy was a key element in the 2015 Energy White Paper and the subsequent National Energy Dialogue. However, this was co-opted by the National Climate Dialogue where energy does not appear as having its own "citizen space".
- Especially at local government level, there is a lack of long-term resourcing to sustain energy and climate action. Many local government projects are implemented through annual or pilot projects, preventing hiring of qualified staff (without permanent contracts). "We know [the climate action] challenge is a 20-year challenge. So, in our resourcing models these should not be projects or contracts."

Individual level/within households

Reduce offloading risks to citizens, avoid energy transition burn out, use of PSO levy

Reduce offloading risk of the energy system to citizens

As a general theme, there was criticism that the risks of the energy system are being passed on to the citizens, something that should actually be done by the state because the citizens are the least able to bear those risks. As an example, was mentioned the price volatility in the energy crisis. And it was suggested that there should be a guarantee for a certain number of kilowatt hours at a certain price to cover the heating costs and that the state should bear the costs in case of higher prices, not the citizens.

Avoiding an energy transition burn out among citizens

There was concern about avoiding an energy transition burnout of citizens who are repeatedly confronted with desired energy behaviours "every time they turn on the news".

Make use of the PSO levy as mechanism for engagement

An idea was raised about the potential to use the Public Service Obligation (PSO) levy as a mechanism for engagement. The PSO levy is a government levy charged to all electricity customers in Ireland. This could be, for instance, if there was more awareness among the public that the PSO levy was going to support underprivileged people in getting their houses up to an adequate energy performance standard or other renewable energy projects. Historically, the levy was supporting peat-based fossil fuel generation. There could be a whole shift in how that PSO levy is administered and how it is communicated to the citizen with a citizen benefit.

In the public sphere

Submission-based consultation as main form of public participation in energy, avoid over technical language

Public participation as submission-based consultations

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- It was pointed out that public energy citizenship mostly takes place in form of submissions to consultations.
- Outcomes of consultations are sometimes not fully clear during the consultation. When getting applied, the policy can be quite different from what citizens expected when they are part of that consultations.
- In terms of good practices, citizens need to see positive impacts and need to be engaged early and often.
- It was remarked that usually, consultations are not a very collaborative process and often have only a very low response rate. “Consultations are about selling an idea. An idea is formed and has been decided on and then it is just a case of getting everybody convinced it is the right way to go”.
- It was criticised that the language used in consultation documents (like most things in the energy sector) is very technical. If somebody has literacy issues, they are completely out of the conversation. “If we are going to inclusive, we have to change the language, our way of communicating this story to people because they will not be able to engage with it.”

In citizen-based organisations and/or in constellations with different types of actors

Putting risks on energy communities, process and costs of grid connection, remuneration for medium scale RE projects, lack of policy cohesion, RE planning process

Given the positioning of “Sustainable Energy Communities” in Irish energy policy and given the group represented at the workshop, most points of discussion concerned energy communities. This included both energy communities engaged in retrofitting and community-led renewable energy – as well as the relation between t

he two forms. A general comment summarised the situation as follows:

“In relation to the graph showing the number of SECs in Ireland [in European comparison], it looks fantastic and that's primarily the work that SEAI and ECTC have done. But it would be really interesting to see another graph as to how many community generation projects that are across Europe, I would say the graph would be completely the opposite direction (the majority of ECs in Ireland are working with energy retrofitting). Because we have only one, and all the other countries have very active community-owned generation facilities. So, it looks really well from one perspective and there’s huge engagement, but unless we get generation projects, that interest will dissipate, and people will ask: ‘What's the point?’”

Putting too many risks on communities

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As already addressed more generally, it was criticised that too much risk and burden is put on communities.

- When it comes to retrofit programs, a major issue is that communities are usually required to front up the grant part of the fund and are only (partially) reimbursed by the government programs when the job is done. During the implementation, the communities carry financial risks fully. That is quite a limiting factor for a community-led renovation organisation. While banks are usually very reluctant to provide loans, Clann Credo (an Irish Social Investment Fund) has been instrumental in bridge financing. Still, communities need to pay interest on the loans. Government programs used to pay in advance, but this was changed due to finance accounting concerns within the government.
- Good practice: Recently, there has been a memorandum of understanding among 19 local authorities to front load funding for the development of Energy Master Plans by Sustainable Energy Communities (bridge finance until payment by Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland after completion of the plans), up to 25,000 Euro. However, this is also seen critical as it is only a shift of risks from communities to local authorities (with limited financial capacities as well), instead of reforming the system at the level of SEAI, i.e., the program design of the national government.
- Another aspect is that as a community organisation seeking government grants for retrofitting, it currently is possible to apply to 7-10 different organisations/programmes – all with different rules and timelines. This creates huge bureaucratic problems for the communities. “The burden of bureaucracy should be on SEAI and the government, not on communities”.

Barriers for community-led renewable energy facilities

When it comes to fostering community-led renewable energy facilities, a number of current barriers were raised that so far have prevented significant developments of such models.

- Process and costs of grid connection: There are two major barriers in relation to the grid operator, ESB networks, particularly in two elements. The first one is in relation to the lead-time between a grid offer and a grid connection, which can vary widely. An example was mentioned where a grid offer for solar power was received in 2016, and in 2023 is still not connected with an unknown time horizon. The second element is the charge for the grid connection. In a grid offer of the ESB Networks, they propose a cost based on the fact that, if the substation needs to be upgraded because it is reaching capacity, the next person/community/corporate organisation has to pay for the full upgrade. And there's no differentiation between community or developer led. This cost burden often renders projects unviable from the beginning. That that is a huge barrier for any community

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generation project to get off the ground. A comparison was made to water services which faces similar challenges when it comes to access to infrastructure networks.

- Remuneration for surplus energy: While a scheme to support micro-generation has been introduced, a policy to govern remuneration of surplus energy from renewable energy facilities between 50-500 kW (an export premium called Small-Scale Generation Support Scheme) has long been missing and is only in the process of being introduced – detail were still unknown at the time of the workshop. For large-scale projects (above 500 kW), there was a separate auction for energy communities in the second round of the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS). However, this practice was not continued in the third round of the scheme.

Planning process for renewables

A number of points were raised in relation to the planning process of renewables.

- A lot of renewable energy projects that go through planning processes are on marginalised land in the country, given that the primary land is mainly used for farming. Being in protected areas, the complexity of planning in sensitive sites is enormous, both cost-wise and in terms of need for expertise. This is a huge challenge for citizen actors.
- It was remarked that there is lack of joint-up thinking in planning but instead sequential with engagement of the planning office of the Environmental Protection Agency only at a certain stage of the process.
- Against this background, the transposition of the recast EU Renewable Energy (2018/2001) has mandated the introduction of a “single point of contact”: All renewable energy projects in the country, must be able to achieve all verification and approval within two years by contacting one point of contact. It was expected that this is going to require all of the processes to run concurrently as opposed to sequentially.
- Certain aspects of the planning process could be centralised (for instance, bird impact studies). For other aspects, the Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy will help local authorities guide where renewables and which renewables should be considered.

Policy cohesion with regard to energy communities

Part of the discussion on energy communities revolved around how programs to support energy communities are designed and, connected to that, how Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, as government agency responsible for implementing such programs, are linked to the relevant governmental departments.

- It was identified that a major barrier for support of energy communities has been that the emergence of programmes has either come from an energy efficiency background or renewable energy background, and they have never been put together. The Better Energy

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Communities and the Energy Efficiency programme does not support community renewable electricity. For the renewable support, SEAI had to set up a different programme under a different part of the department that works with a different policy set. Therefore, alignment and cohesion between these programs have been lacking. The structure how the small team of SEAI is supposed to get involved with different people in different departments has not been able to lead to more cohesion. And in the departments, there is no person nor position nor unit formally responsible for community energy.

Input regarding and examples of promising business and social innovation models

Cooperative networks and reform of the cooperative legal form

- One idea was for energy communities, which often work according to cooperative principles, to improve exchange and network with other cooperative organisations, especially farming co-ops, which have a long tradition in Ireland.
- It was noted that the cooperative legal form and structure, regulated in the Industrial and Provident Societies act, should be revamped (for instance using the example of the UK Defined Community Benefit Cooperative, where the benefit can specifically go to the community).

Community-based (housing)

Challenge of developing stable revenue streams

For energy communities that have mostly focused on retrofits and energy efficiency, a key barrier is the challenge to develop stable revenue streams, simultaneously to doing retrofits for the community groups. While there are lot of mechanisms in place to support the start and then to do Better Energy Communities (retrofit) projects, it remains all volunteer-led. There is a need to develop other revenue streams to snowball the work and keep momentum. If not, initial local enthusiasm may start to decrease after a couple of projects

Community-based (REC/CEC)

Legislation on grid use and micro-grids

It was noted that there is currently new legislation in consultation concerning private wire. Under previous legislation, it was not allowed to run a cable from one building to another (provided there is still access to the public grid). This has negated the possibility of a mini- or micro grid, for a cluster of buildings to have generation and share in it. Change of this regulation is considered a game changer because it opens up huge possibilities.

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Latvia

Workshop agenda and list participants

Date and time: September 27, 2023, 13:15-17:00 (CET+1)
Place: Riga
Format: Closed-door interactive seminar-roundtable
Organiser: University of Latvia

Agenda

13:15-13:30	Introduction to the EnergyPROSPECTS project and the objectives of the workshop
13:30-14:00	The concept of energy citizenship and its implementation policy framework and practical experience in Europe: a summary of 9 country case studies
14:00-14:30	Participants' introduction, initial questions, and comments
14:30-15:00	Policy and regulatory framework and practical experience of implementing energy citizenship in Latvia
15:00-15:30	Discussion on the experience of energy citizenship in Latvia: what are the limiting factors and how should policy and legislation be improved
15:30-16:00	Coffee break and informal discussions
16:00-16:30	Stakeholder discussions on the development of energy citizenship in Latvia
16:30- 17:00	Summary of results of the workshop, next steps

Participants

1.	Kirill Goncharov	Office of Building Preservation and Energy Savings, Team Leader
2.	Krista Pētersone	NGO Green Liberty
3.	Vineta Kleinberga	Riga Stradins University, Researcher
4.	Ance Rusova	University of Latvia, doctoral programme student
5.	Erika Lagzdina	University of Latvia, lead expert
6.	Rasa Ikstena	University of Latvia, expert
7.	Jānis Brizga	University of Latvia, lead researcher

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8.	Ivars Kudrenickis	Physical Energy Institute/University of Latvia, Prof., lead researcher
9.	Raimonds Ernsteins	University of Latvia, Prof.
10.	Judīte Dipane	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, senior expert
11.	Liene Voroncova	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, expert

Outcomes of the workshop

During the roundtable session, the primary focus of the discussion revolved around the energy citizenship (EnCi) concept itself, the outcomes of the Latvian PESTEL analysis, as well as recommendations to integrate the EnCi concept into existing policy planning documents. These insights pertained to two main areas: those of a broader nature applicable to EnCi as a whole and those specific to various contexts and groups of individuals where energy citizenship can be practiced (illustrated in the diagram below). In the Latvian workshop, discussions were primarily cantered on four out of the five spheres or constellations outlined.

Below, we have synthesised the participants' contributions into key points concerning opportunities, challenges, fundamental messages, and effective practices across the following thematic categories: overarching/transversal aspects, individual and household contexts, organizational settings, the public domain, and within citizen-based organizations or in collaborations involving diverse actors. To offer a concise overview, we have highlighted the main keywords associated with each theme at the top of their respective sections.

Transversal

Trust vs. Mistrust; Energy Transition; Government Approach; Public Funding

The discourse on trust and confidence versus mistrust and defiance plays a crucial role in the context of energy citizenship in Latvia. It highlights the need for a critical examination of the current government's approach to energy transition.

One critical aspect identified is that the government's primary focus is the availability of resources and policy to meet national obligations set by the European Union requirements. These efforts are not explicitly driving toward a successful energy transition. The focus on compliance to reach energy targets may cause the government to overlook the fundamental goals of the transition itself and embed the untrust in energy transition ideas and respective government decisions. However, it has been emphasized by the participants, that in the Latvian context energy sector reforms prevail over transformative elements and systemic change.

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Furthermore, it seems that the government is not actively striving to transform the energy system to facilitate the energy transition. Instead, they may be inclined to implement minimal reforms to maintain the stability of the energy supply. This approach might hinder the necessary changes required for a sustainable energy future.

A concerning aspect of the government's approach is the implementation of the European Green Deal without sufficient public funding, instead envisioning that all private sector actors and the public in general shall undertake voluntary and also top-down enforced measures to meet energy (climate) targets. This places the main burden of transition responsibility on individuals and entrepreneurs. However, there is a lack of acknowledgment that individuals are often constrained by existing socio-economic and infrastructural frameworks, which, in turn, are the responsibility of government (including public monopoly companies) and municipalities that provide energy-bound services.

Individual level/within households

Confidence; Active Citizens; NIMBY; Economic Focus

In Latvia, there are three distinct categories of Energy citizenship development:

- Active citizens: These are individuals who are already actively engaged in various civic matters and choose to participate in energy transition activities. They possess a considerably developed understanding of participatory tools and mechanisms for public engagement but may need further capacity building for a deeper comprehension of the energy system and its elements, including stakeholders, policy, technologies, and economics.
- NIMBY (Not in my Backyard): This group is characterized by their opposition to specific energy-related issues, such as nuclear energy, reliance on natural gas from Russia, or air pollution. Wind energy turbines (both offshore and onshore) are an ongoing debate in the Latvian society. The group is vocal in their resistance to these specific aspects of the energy landscape.
- Economic focus: The predominant motivation for many efforts related to energy transition and energy citizenship in Latvia revolves around economic considerations. These efforts are primarily aimed at saving energy costs and ensuring energy independence for the country. For the public economic aspects of energy and energy justice are critical.

These three categories encompass the diverse perspectives and motivations within the realm of energy citizenship development in Latvia, reflecting a range of interests and priorities in the context of energy transition and sustainability.

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Within organisations

Responsibility; Public Engagement; Financial Constraints; Private Sector Involvement.

To support energy citizenship in Latvia effectively, it's crucial to avoid imposing unrealistic individual and collective responsibilities on people. Instead, it's important to recognize that there are other key players within the energy system, such as the public regulator, energy providers, and infrastructure (grid) operators, who bear legal responsibility for the enabling conditions necessary for the transition. Enabling 'energy citizenship' should not necessarily mean burdening individuals with many decisions on the sustainability of their energy choices.

There is a risk that these key sectoral actors may miss the opportunity to engage meaningfully with the public, despite growing public interest and involvement in energy-related issues. To foster a successful energy transition, these transition key actors need to communicate and engage openly and transparently with the public.

Additionally, a challenge is the limited funding for local authorities (municipalities) to ensure utility services for their citizens in a way that supports energy transition and individual and collective sustainable choices. Similarly, associations involved in energy citizenship efforts may also face financial constraints, limiting their capacity to engage in meaningful activities.

Private sector involvement will be pivotal in financing and driving the energy transition. Aligning private investments with the needs and interests of citizens is crucial. Ensuring that private sector investments are in line with the broader goals and values of the community can help bridge the gap between corporate interests and citizen needs. However, this is not always the case also for renewable energy projects, e.g., many wind park development projects are criticized for not engaging enough with local communities and organizations.

In the public sphere

Decentralized Energy System; Trust and Institutions; Uncoordinated Positive Elements.

The decentralized nature of Latvia's energy system, which does not include nuclear energy, creates an opportunity for a broader concept of energy citizenship to take root. There are also many other positive elements providing space for wider public involvement and participation in shaping the energy future of the country. However, these elements are often uncoordinated, and they do not collectively facilitate the necessary transformational efforts required for a successful energy system transition or transformation.

One of the primary barriers to progress is the lack of trust in institutions and policymaking processes. While the policymaking process is technically open, it tends to be passive and often

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lacks active engagement. In many cases, these processes are formal and do not effectively involve the public. Institutions frequently lack both the willingness and capacity to engage in meaningful public debates and adequately respond to people's concerns. One significant challenge arises from the relatively tight deadlines for submitting legislative proposals, making it difficult to thoroughly prepare these submissions. Consequently, public discourse on important energy transition topics often only begins after decisions have already been taken.

In citizen-based organisations and/or in constellations with different types of actors

Community Involvement; Energy Communities; Public Support; Positive Ripple Effect.

There is a need to place emphasis on community involvement and showcase successful examples of energy citizenship in Latvia. Energy communities have the potential to become key agents in driving the energy transition. However, it was acknowledged that the development of energy communities in Latvia depends on public support and advocacy which is quite limited or even missing. Additionally, the approval of the legal framework for energy communities is delayed. Firstly, the transposition of the relevant EU directives into national legislation is not adequate for the establishment and operation of energy communities. Secondly, there are no compensation mechanisms for communities for energy production. Progress is slow in this regard.

Energy communities can serve as role models and demonstrate the benefits of active participation in energy-related activities. Their success can inspire others to become involved in the energy transition, creating a positive ripple effect throughout the country. Encouraging community participation and providing support for collective efforts can help bridge the gap between government policies and the practical realities faced by individuals and businesses. Furthermore, energy communities provide an essential bridge between government policies and the practical realities faced by individuals and businesses. Often, in Latvia the aspirations and mandates of government energy policies may seem distant and abstract to ordinary citizens and small enterprises. Energy communities, by taking concrete steps toward sustainability, can break down these complex policies into tangible, relatable actions. They showcase that the transition to cleaner and more sustainable energy sources is not just an abstract concept but something that can be concretely pursued at the community level.

Encouraging community participation in energy projects and supporting collective efforts is a vital component of this bridge-building process. Governments, organizations, and individuals can provide the necessary resources, incentives, and expertise to help these communities thrive. This support can come in the form of grants, tax incentives, technical assistance, and knowledge sharing, enabling communities to undertake ambitious renewable energy projects and energy

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efficiency initiatives. This approach can foster trust, collaboration, and a shared commitment to achieving a sustainable energy future in Latvia.

Input regarding and examples of promising business and social innovation models

Community-based (housing)

Housing projects become more popular in Latvia, as there is available co-financing from the public funds for refurbishing houses to improve energy efficiency and to switch energy sources to more environmental ones. The promising models are based on shared costs with the municipal budget as municipalities are legally responsible for providing sustainable housing for their citizens. Current models involve co-financing from the public budget for technicalities, the communities may lack capacity in, such as energy audits of buildings (related to multi-housing apartments) and project preparation for financing (grants, subsidies). Households cover the costs of infrastructure improvements/change. Such a business model can exist due to low-interest rates for the public loans run by the state financing agency ALTUM.

Community-based (REC/CEC)

Community-based initiatives in Latvia are still in their infancy. Business models in this respect rely on public funding and/or municipal "participatory budget". In practice, citizens may suggest improvements in their living areas, and the ideas approved by the evaluation commission are financed from earmarked municipal funds. The key message is that project results shall be beneficial for the wider community. However, such projects are insufficiently focusing on energy improvements (positive examples are RES-based lighting of children's playgrounds, etc.)

Organisation-based

Organisationally based initiatives are available in the public sector (ministries, and particularly in various levels of educational establishments) and private business sector as well. Smart buildings with energy production technologies are some examples. A significant driver for such initiatives in schools is the Eco-school movement- an international methodology based on local initiatives, striving to improve the sustainability (incl. energy sustainability) of the organization and involve the broader local public.

Policy recommendations

Policy Recommendations for Promoting Energy Citizenship in Latvia when revising the National Energy and Climate Plan:

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- **Barrier Removal**: Remove barriers hindering the adoption of low-tech solutions and the development of energy communities. These barriers can limit the involvement of citizens in energy initiatives.
- **Clear Responsibility**: Within the plan, establish a responsible agency (department) specifically tasked with the development of energy citizenship in Latvia. This agency should oversee and coordinate related activities. Additionally, ensure the inclusion of measurable success indicators to measure progress.
- **Prosumerism with justice**: When promoting prosumerism, the government should consider principles of justice, particularly in terms of cost distribution. Ensure that the benefits and costs of prosumer initiatives are equitably distributed among different social groups. Address energy poverty by providing equal opportunities for all social groups to engage in energy-related activities, with a special focus on tackling energy poverty. Economic stability and predictability of energy sector behaviour shall be better managed by governmental agencies.

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Netherlands

Workshop agenda and list participants

Date and time: 10 June 2023, 12:00-17:00 CET
Place: Student Hotel, Eindhoven
Format: Interactive workshop with breakout discussions
Organiser: Maastricht University

Agenda

From 12:00	Arrival of participants: Welcome, coffee and tea
12:15-13:00	Networking lunch
13:00-15:00	Theme 1: Enlarging transformative impact and transformative achievements. Successes and struggles: conditions of (non)success
15:00-15:15	Coffee break
15:15-1700	Theme 2: National Policy session: relationships with government and roles of intermediaries
17:00-17:15	Closing up and what happens next
17:15-18:00	Networking drinks

Participants

1.	Eise Spiker	Loenen Energy Fund Secretary
2.	Geert Claessens	Chairman Reindonk Energy
3.	Peter Ramaekers	Co-founder of WeertEnergie
4.	Mies van der Loo	Active member Weert Energie
5.	Joey Reedijk	Program manager Energy transition Drechtsteden
6.	Joeri van de Riet	National Association of Active Residents - LSA
7.	Alex Peters	President of energy cooperative EMEC
8.	Joey ten Cat	Policy officer Province of South Holland
9.	Geert Verbong	Emeritus Professor of System Innovation & Sustainability Transitions Eindhoven University of Technology
10.	Wendy Broers	Lecturer and energy system researcher Zuyd University of Applied Sciences & Maastricht University

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11.	Tim Strasser	Moderator, transformative agency expert
12.	René Kemp	EnergyPROSPECTS researcher, Maastricht University
13.	Souhaila HamHam	Note taker

Outcomes of the workshop

The workshops brought out various topics for the transformation of the energy sector and the inclusion of citizens therein.

- How can the energy system can become more resilient and inclusive?
    - Imagining new activities (in the local community) and develop strategies for this.
    - Imagine and lobby for macro-institutional rules that alter the power balance of decision-making.
    - Further develop critical thinking (about energy as a basic need, the power of incumbents, injustices in the system and the importance of different ownership forms and strategies of sufficiency).
    - Engage in partnerships with private business, as something which may require the set-up of new organisations and agreements on the distribution of costs and benefits of joint projects (such as collective wind power generation).
    - Be more oriented towards the creation of local energy systems, together with government, energy companies and ICT companies (without selling out). Energy cooperatives can become traders in and shapers of smart grid configurations and funders of deep renovation projects (by non-members).

Inclusion of marginalised groups

- Marginalized groups are less represented in civic initiatives for energy transitions. However, there is attention to their position, for example through attention to energy poverty.
- Socializing the energy transition (in the sense that everyone participates and can participate) is desirable. A crucial aspect (condition) is to make the transition meaningful from the perspective of the citizen. This involves citizens' perception of whether something is desirable. People only feel involved if something actually makes sense in their eyes, and not at the expense of things that are also important.
- Honesty, transparency, and participation are important factors.

Intermediaries are important for connecting parties but sometimes also have a commercial interest (banks, developers, etc.)

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"Developers are clever guys who are adept at putting the costs and risks on others and pocketing the benefits. You have to force them to be transparent, be able to look in the books with them."

Creating the right type of knowledge

- Energy cooperatives contain a lot of technical expertise, but other types of expertise are also important, for example on administrative procedures or local knowledge. This includes knowledge about what types of subsidies exist and which ones can be used together, knowledge and opportunities relevant for a certain district.
- You should never judge an energy carrier on one aspect (pars pro toto). Each option has a sustainability challenge (and often an economic challenge, a safety challenge, and a security challenge). Negative impacts should be minimized as much as possible, as an energy transition challenge.
- Nuclear power is back in the picture. The province of Limburg is very interested in Small Modular Reactors (SMR). This involves nuclear fission in small modular nuclear power plants with a very large energy output (of 1,000 wind turbines). This is a surprising new development. Knowledge about it is very incomplete. The firmness of proponents and opponents is in stark contrast to what we really know.
- Democratization requires informed citizens. That knowledge must be obtainable and relevant from the point of view of the knowledge receiver. Often the knowledge provided is not an answer to a question (or a concern). It is better to start from knowledge needs. Energy coaches need to inquire into this.
- Experts don't know everything either. Other experts are needed to make that clear. That makes it confusing for citizens. Moreover, citizens mostly hear what they want to hear.

Inequality is associated with institutional racism

There is inequality in access to resources: You have to speak the language of institutions to get money. Initiatives in Rotterdam-Zuid (a neighbourhood with many immigrants) are less successful than initiatives in Rotterdam-Alexander. This was referred to as "institutional racism". When people of a different race (origin) are at a structural disadvantage, it is institutional.

Networks actively use each other's people

This can cause an overload of certain people. Every volunteer organization uses other organizations because they can't do it alone; people contribute unevenly. It is difficult to change this, because in an energy cooperative you command people to do certain task.

The development fund for energy cooperatives is an excellent policy measure which should be used across the Netherlands (and possibly Europe)

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From this fund (used in the Dutch provinces Limburg, Utrecht and South-Holland), loans are made available for project initiatives that only have to be repaid if they are successful. With financial support from the fund, project leaders-to-be can be trained and paid for project development activities. This gives energy cooperatives much more clout.

Requirements for local ownership of renewable energy generation projects are a useful instrument for ensuring that the community benefits from renewable energy projects

To prevent that the revenues of new energy generation projects are captured entirely by commercial parties and to limit the negative consequences for people living in the surrounding of the projects (through a careful siting of the projects), the climate act in the Netherlands advices that 50% of local energy ownership. The target is a general target for 2030. Locally there is scope to deviate from this for local project-related reasons. It is up to municipalities to impose this as a formal requirement (many of them do). The ownership ratio target ensures that the community co-benefits from energy generation projects. Energy cooperatives benefit greatly from the requirement for local ownership and citizen participation requirements, as private developers turn to them to meet local ownership requirements.

Energy citizenship projects are best pursued within a broader frame of multiple value creation

This is not fully explored by energy initiatives, which are typically focused on energy, neglecting other sustainability issues and restoring communities. Strategic thinking and collaborative relations with other actors may help them to go further in this direction. If people who create multiple values are rewarded for the benefits they provide, the economic case for multiple value creation is enhanced.

Energy citizenship initiatives should make greater use of students and knowledge institutes

Students can act as change agents and obtain practical knowledge and sensitivity to the needs and wants of less-privileged people.

The strong focus of local governments on heat networks (to replace natural gas) should be reconsidered

Citizens are often opposed to heat networks for very good reasons. They find them too expensive; they distrust heat companies and they do not want to be tied to a monopolist. They also do not want residual heat from fossil production processes or waste plants, because they do not fit within a circular society. Once in place, heat networks cannot be easily expanded and may lock-out more attractive options.

Making the energy transition more inclusive is desirable

A crucial aspect (condition) in this regard is to make the transition meaningful from the perspective of the citizen. This involves citizens' perception of whether something is desirable. People only feel involved if something actually makes sense in their eyes, and not at the expense

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of things that are also important. Honesty, transparency, and participation are important factors.

Are more intermediaries needed?

There was no agreement on this. It varies from project to project. Often there is quite a bit of knowledge in-house, but how do you mobilize it? Intermediaries can be hired and made available by the government.

Municipalities are an important support but they can do more:

- Good dialogues with municipalities are much needed.
- Policies do not always align well with needs.
- Grant programs change too quickly.

Energy cooperatives must operate differently: rely more on own plans

- There is a tendency for cooperatives to react to (subsidy) schemes.

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Spain

Workshop agenda and list participants

Date and time: 2 October 2023, 9:30-14:00 CET
Place: A Coruña (Galicia)
Format: Closed-door roundtable
Organiser: University of A Coruña

Agenda

From 9:00	Arrival of participants
9:30-10:00	Welcome and presentation of participants. Introduction of the project and presentation of the session's objectives
Part 1: Impact and transformative achievements of ENCI. Successes and struggles: conditions of (non)success.	
10:00-10:30	What do we mean when we talk about energy citizenship? A European perspective
10:30-11:30	Roundtable 1: Strategies to promote the active and transformative participation of citizens and institutional agents. An Empowerment Model.
Part 2: National policy session: relations with the government and roles of intermediaries	
12:00-12:30	The energy transition in Spain: PESTEL analysis and intermediaries.
12:30-13:30	Roundtable 2: Discussion on PESTEL analysis and roles of citizens in energy transition.
13:30-13:50	Plenary session to share key ideas, observations and questions.
13:55-14:00	Closing up and what happens next?

Participants

1.	Antonio Prieto	A Coruña City Council. Secretary of the Consensus Association and coordinator of the Spanish Hub of UrbanByNature.
2.	Armando Yáñez	Researcher and teacher. Polytechnic School of Engineering. University of A Coruña (UDC).
3.	Cecilia Lopez	Project manager and member of the Spanish Network for Sustainable Development (REDS).
4.	Diego Quiñoy	Urban Ecosystems and Industry Researcher. Technological Centre Energy Lab.
5.	Jorge Martinez	Volunteer and Board of Directors. GoiEner Elkartea Cooperative. Energy Generation and Consumption Cooperative. Basque Country.
6.	Jose Eiras	Treasurer and coordinator of the marketing strategy and the customer service area of Nosa Enerxía Sociedad Cooperativa Gallega.

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7.	Maria Gonzalez	A Coruña City Council. Vice-President of the Consensus Association and coordinator of the Spanish Hub of UrbanByNature.
8.	Pablo Alvarez	Technical staff of the Federation of Renewables Union Coop.
9.	Rosa Núñez	Head of technical unit for project modification and progress. Galician Energy Institute (INEGA)

Outcomes of the workshop

The Spanish' roundtable started with a brief introduction of the general purpose of the project, its progress so far, including definitions and classifications of ENCI, presentation of results and some examples. This presentation allowed for an exchange workshop focusing on two key points: the role of citizens in transformative agency and national policy in the energy transition in Spain. This report focuses on the second part of the meeting, which lasted two hours, where relations with the government, the role of intermediaries and citizenship in the energy transition were discussed, while also seeking to reach a consensus on some policy recommendations contextualised in the peninsular and island territory of Southwest Europe.

Under the heading "**National policy session: relations with the government and roles of intermediaries**", the general results of the PESTEL analysis in Europe were presented, alonside the most outstanding aspects as barriers and facilitators in the Spanish context, with the aim of comparing the opinions of the participants on the situation in Spain.

Based on a reading and analysis of the enablers and barriers found by the EnergyProspects team in Spain, participants were asked several questions that guided the discussion. These were:

- Are there any barriers and facilitators other than those already mentioned? Any other particularity of the context?
- What forms of ENCI do you consider standing out in Spain? Any good practices?
- What is needed to further support ENCI in Spain? What should the government (and the EU) do (in relation to the local/national energy transition)?

The general ideas of the participants have been summarised in keywords and classified into the following themes: transversal; individual/within households; within organisations; in the public sphere; in citizens' organisations and/or in constellations with different types of actors; and in social movements.

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Transversal

Geopolitical challenges, political objectives, price increase as a facilitator, reducing bureaucracy, polarization, monitoring environmental impact, energy poverty

- A major barrier is the great **geopolitical challenges** that may affect the energy system and the availability and exploitation of resources (e.g., oil and fossil gas).
- Hence, it is proposed that system change should be bottom-up and small-scale to ensure energy security.
- Nevertheless, **changes in political objectives** represent a hurdle for the energy transition, especially at the European level, e.g., the phase-out of internal combustion engine vehicles has recently been delayed, harming the energy transition process itself and citizens as a consequence.
- Although rising oil and gas prices are harmful to citizens' pockets, these **measures may favour renewable alternatives**, which may end up being more cost-effective by acting as a facilitator for the rise of these alternatives. In fact, they point out that a recent report indicates that most of the renewable technologies already in use have a better return on investment impact than the fossil alternative and with less uncertainty in the face of geopolitical issues.
- One of the barriers most highlighted as important by participants is **bureaucracy**.
    - The administrative and legal procedures need to be simplified, especially in the issue of self-consumption.
    - Moreover, these procedures should be made easier and more comprehensible, together with the reduction and elimination of hurdles so that citizens are not disadvantaged by the difficulty of the procedure.
- The **polarization** of political discourse and the emergence of climate change denial positions have been highlighted as a political barrier, when until recently, it seemed that there was consensus on the need to advance in the energy transition.
- The recommendation at the technical and political level are as follows:
    - Combining different thermal storage technologies at the household level.
    - Improving the energy system, beyond the mere incorporation of new measures to existing ones. A complete and deep substitution of those energy resources that reduce the possibilities of a clean transition is required.
    - Considering the scarcity of resources. The energy transition needs to be planned taking into account the future availability of the necessary resources, e.g. mineral resources, which may become scarce over time, as well as fossil fuels.
    - Urging the government to go for electrification of collective transport sectors, such as rail, metro and trolleybuses, because these are proven ways that have existed in the past and are very efficient.

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- Ensuring greater clarity and specificity in legislation to clarify implementation pathways, including the modification of electricity market regulations to introduce greater flexibility in strategies.
- The **environmental impact** of all energy systems must be monitored. It is proposed to prioritise the minimisation of the environmental impact in the energy transition, i.e. prioritise those actions with the lowest environmental impact such as energy efficiency, or energy installations in areas affected by human activity, whether they are roofs or artificial surfaces, which account for 3.95% of the territory in Spain.
- **Energy poverty** is one of the concerns that has been highlighted in the debate, putting the Cooperative of Generation and Consumption of Energy, Goiener (Basque Country), as an example of good practices to combat energy poverty, in which they implemented the **social currency** *(based on trust and cooperation and the exchange of goods or services).*
- The role of technologies in the energy transition must be revisited: from *techno-optimism* to technologies as a means to an end.
- Institutional confidence index: there is currently a generalized distrust of citizens in renewable energies, their usefulness, the ways in which they are installed and the benefits they bring to citizens.

Individual level/within households

Will, knowledge and useful information, ability to discern, projects of people for people, cooperativism, economic support, living with what is really needed

- It is considered that the essential thing for energy citizenship at the individual level is to have the **will** to do so.
- From there, it is recommended to provide **basic knowledge and useful information** about the current system *"where are we and where are we going?".*
- This information is important to help citizens **discern** what information is true and what is not, due to the current paradox between over-information and disinformation, which is currently a widespread barrier due to the rise of climate change denial movements and policies.
- It is necessary to improve citizens' understanding of the consequences of the current energy system on climate change, the need to make changes (individual and collective) and make them reconsider their energy expenditure: "Do you consume what you really need or are you overdoing it? Is living with more better?"
- At the community level, social support from, for example, **cooperatives and associations**, is a facilitator to involve citizens, help new local initiatives, link people to their territory and increase their autonomy.

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- Sharing knowledge and encouraging **community** projects can help them feel that they are part of energy projects made by people and for people and therefore **worthwhile.**
- **Financial support** is necessary**,** both at individual and Community level, especially for initial investment, but it is also needed for further developing initiatives.
    - The lack of these social and economic support measures is a barrier to energy citizenship.

Within organisations

Eliminate taxes from sustainable facilities and the legal limit of compensation, disseminate success stories

- Replace the subsidising of installations of sustainable energy systems with a removal of the VAT.
- It is proposed to remove the statutory compensation limit (electricity sold back to the grid is only compensated to a certain limit), especially for photo voltaic installations at in private homes.
- It is recommended to disseminate success stories to facilitate the capture of financing, including private, which in many cases is very difficult to complement with public aid.

In the public sphere

Understandable information, improving information on financing possibilities, making visible the consequences of climate change, social awareness

- It is recommended that commercial energy-related products be **understood** by citizens, especially everything related to energy tariffs.
- One barrier is that current energy rates are constantly changing, creating insecurity among citizens, and making it difficult for them to control their spending and savings.
- It is necessary **to inform citizens of the funding possibilities** for their initiatives, since they exist, but citizens do not know them or do not know how to apply for them.
- At the social level, in addition to improving the strategy of information and citizen training on climate change, it is proposed to promote and give greater **visibility to the knowledge of the environmental and social consequences** that climate change can have in the different areas of the country, since it will not affect all regions equally, for example, the rise in sea level can affect the islands in a much more serious way.
- This, in addition, would bring with it **greater social awareness,** such as that which occurs in energy communities, which in the face of a problem or need in their region can act and impact on it, and contribute to the objective of having a sustainable country and world.

In citizen-based organisations and/or in constellations with different types of actors

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Energy communities as a base and supported by public administration, integral energy system, comprehensive legislation, synergies, flexible financing, empowered citizenship, lack of civic and participatory culture

- It is proposed to promote a new model of energy transition focused on the action of **energy communities** and **supported by public administrations**.
- The Local Public Administrations have a very important role as a "dynamizer" of local initiatives and energy communities, due to the complexity involved in its management that, in isolation, requires enormous volunteer work.
- **Collective forms of ENCI** are those that can have a **greater impact and more synergies**, compared to individualized actions, although they are not intended to be underestimated.
- As a barrier, is a **lack of clear and comprehensively defined legislation** to enable the development of energy communities (currently, ECs are based on royal decrees on shared self-consumption and the photovoltaic system).
- **Build on local traditional forms of organisation:** Galicia has the advantage that, by tradition, there are already social cooperatives (associations of forests, shellfish gatherers, even industrial estates) that now try to take advantage of their organization to try to improve from the energy point of view, for example, mountain communities that are creating their initiative and their own photovoltaic, or neighbourhood communities. These social organisations already established in Galicia can constitute a facilitator for the formation of ENCI.
- Despite their promising future, these types of self-consumption (e.g., in a building or for very limited areas) are small targets. The aim should be to create an **energy community on a higher level**, e.g., at district level.
    - The ambition should be an **integrated energy system** that covers the needs of households, mobility, and electric vehicles. In this way, neighbourhoods would be self-sufficient, being able to produce more energy than they consume and establish **synergies** with other energy communities, neighbourhoods or entities/institutions.
    - These synergies are important in the energy transition, especially at a technical level for energy management, but also with other entities with which collaboration can be carried out to achieve the proposed objectives.
- It is recommended to implement **flexible financing** since the different energy communities have different needs and the provision of economic resources that facilitate the initial take-off of the initiatives.
- Promote governance based on cooperatives and associations, models in which citizens acquire the ability to make decisions and recover their energy sovereignty.
- As an example of good practices, Unión Renovables Coop. It takes the associative movement to all cooperatives and educates in energy cooperativism to promote this new model based

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on the values of democracy, energy sovereignty, social economy and equality and achieve an **empowered citizenship**.

- For these governance models, the professionalization of entities with technical, administrative, legal, economic, and social knowledge is recommended to support the actions developed by the initiatives.
- However, the **lack of civic and participatory culture** in the Spanish territory (due to the prominent individualism) turns these forms of collective and collaborative governance unfeasible.

In social movements

Just transition, frontal opposition, defending heritage, defending local communities, irreversible environmental impacts

- The boom of the wind industry in Galicia, as a result of its geography (a large part of its surface is mountainous) and its meteorology (constant and moderate winds), is affecting several localities and causing great concern. Several mobilisations have already been called to demand an alternative energy model from the government, as opposed to the one being imposed by the electricity oligopoly. In these social movements participate more than 200 entities, including neighbourhood groups and platforms, affected, environmental, cultural, social, or political, who reject the massive and unplanned development of large wind farms that causes multiple irreversible impacts on the territory. They warn that the model that is being imposed continues to perpetuate the role of Galicia as a territory of sacrifice in the State and in Europe, in favour of the large metropolises hyper-demanding energy.
    - This form of opposition can be seen both as a barrier because it is a movement against a sustainable energy system, as a facilitator, since the movement is not against wind energy itself, but seeks a fair implementation in which the environmental impacts of wind farms and the benefit obtained are taken into account, which should be at the local level.

Case of good practices

Renewables with the Territory: a shared vision[15]

- It is a project that tries to overcome the controversies regarding the implementation of wind and solar energy through dialogue and participation of the main actors involved in this

[15] https://reds-sdsn.es/renovables-con-el-territorio-una-vision-compartida/

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process and that brings together companies, public administrations and social organizations and other interested parties.

- It promotes multisectoral dialogue with actors and protagonists of the energy transition, while encouraging participation to address the main issues and generate positive proposals, mechanisms and solutions considering social, economic, environmental, archaeological heritage and regulatory aspects.
- The project proposes months (from June 2023 to March 2024) of constant communication with these multisectoral actors, through four dialogue sessions in which the topics related to this process, interviews and communication will be addressed.
- The first of these sessions will talk about the **synergies of the deployment of renewables with the economic activities of the territory** regarding employment and job opportunities, such as agriculture, beekeeping, livestock or rural tourism.
- In subsequent sessions**, the mechanisms for returning benefits to the territories** with renewable projects will be addressed together with the **processes of exposure and public opinion** about renewable energy projects. The actors will furthermore work on the **guidelines/criteria for future areas of deployment of renewables.**

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