

How can cities alleviate energy poverty through energy communities and citizen engagement?

DATE: 14 October 2021 09:30-12:30

PLACE: Online Side Event during European Week of Regions and Cities

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SHORT DESCRIPTION

There is movement in the European energy landscape. An increasing number of stakeholders, companies, municipalities and citizens are exploring their options, and rights, to produce their own renewable energy and to share it in energy communities. Such solutions are now gaining in popularity, not least due to rights for these communities materializing at European and national level. Renewable energy communities have a proven track-record of contributing to more social acceptance of new infrastructure and technologies due to their general focus of keeping value in the region and to involve local communities as early as possible. However, the implementation of these new rights on Member State level is advancing at different paces, partially due to concerns that a more favourable framework for collective prosumerism could come at the cost of those citizens who might not chose to take part in an energy community.

This is especially important when considering that an estimated 50 million households in the European Union are struggling with energy poverty. This means that they are unable to adequately heat, cool or provide other required energy services in their homes at affordable cost. Living in inadequately heated or cooled households has a negative impact on human health and wellbeing and prevents those affected from adequately participating in society. Participation of these citizen groups in community-based energy projects might therefore not seem as the most obvious option to explore and, often, national legal frameworks make it difficult for persons receiving social benefits to invest into anything.

But renewable energy communities can be the solution for reducing energy bills of those affected by energy poverty through innovative financing schemes. Municipalities are already increasingly undertaking tailored actions to engage with and support energy poor citizens. The role of cities in facilitating a more inclusive energy transition is becoming very evident with many examples existing already. This session will focus on how cities are already reaching out to vulnerable citizens and support them through energy communities. The session will seek to inspire through concrete examples why renewable energy communities specifically are a powerful tool for citizen engagement and energy poverty alleviation actions.



AGENDA

TIME	PROGRAMME	Speaker
09:30-09:35	Welcome & Moderation	Carsten Rothballer, Coordinator, ICLEI Europe
09:35-09:45	Keynote	Kata Tüttö, Member of the Committee of the Regions PES Group, ECON and ENVE Commissions (tbc)
09:45-10:00	Why are energy communities important for a just energy transition?	Maria-Rosaria di Nucci, Freie Universität Berlin, COME RES Coordinator
10:15-10:30	How does energy poverty materialize and how can vulnerable citizens be included in the energy transition?	POWERPOOR in conversation with DECIDE
10:30-10:45	Case Study 1: City of Porto	Rui Pimenta, CEO at Porto Energy Agency (tbc)
10:45-11:00	Case Study 2: City of Tartu	Marek Muiste, Energy Expert at Tartu Regional Energy Agency
11:00-11:15	Coffee Break	
11:15-12:00	Breakout Room1: Case Study 1 Reflecting on the replicability of the case (drivers, barriers and enabling factors)	Moderated by Eleni Kanellou, Research Associate, NTUA
11:15-12:00	Breakout Room2: Case Study 2 Reflecting on the replicability of the case (drivers, barriers and enabling factors)	Moderated by Silvia Assalini, ICLEI Europe
12:00-12:15	Reports from breakout sessions	Session Moderators
12:15-12:20	Conclusion & Outlook	Arthur Hinsch, Officer, ICLEI Europe
12:20-12:25	Close	Arthur Hinsch, Officer, ICLEI Europe



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This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 953040. The sole responsibility for the content of this document lies with the COME RES project and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the European Union.