



**EUSALP** EU STRATEGY FOR THE ALPINE REGION

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# Renewables by and for citizens: the role of renewable energy cooperatives in the energy transition

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80 million people, 7 countries, 48 regions,  
mountains and plains addressing together  
common challenges and opportunities



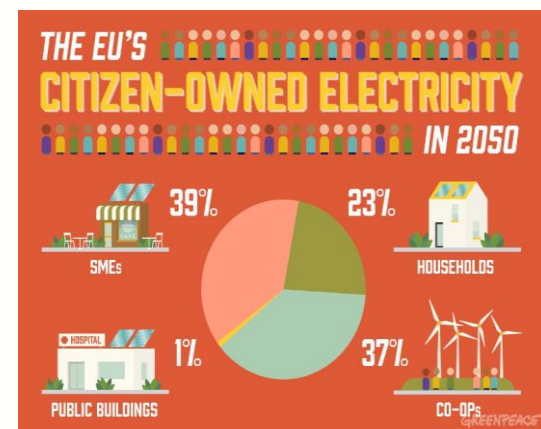
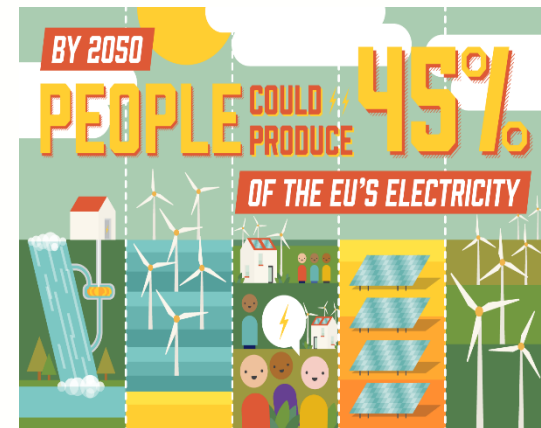
This project is co-financed by the European Union via Interreg Alpine Space

## What is the potential of citizen energy?

*By 2050:*

≈ 83% EU households (113 households) could contribute to:

- RES production
- Demand response
- Energy storage



## What is an energy community?

- Renewable Energy Sources cooperatives, Community power, or community energy initiatives (i.e. energy communities)
- Groups of citizens who cooperate on RES or EE
  - Production
  - Supply
  - Distribution
  - Storage
  - Services
  - Electrical vehicle sharing
- REScoops = Legal entity < ICA principles



## Energy communities: a different way to do business

1. Voluntary & open membership
2. Economic participation
3. Democratic ownership
4. Autonomy and independence
5. Training & education
6. Cooperation among cooperatives
7. Concern for community



## Benefits of local action: revenues from local renewables to meet local needs

- Local supply of cheap, clean renewables
- Renovation of local infrastructure
- Buildings renovation
- Energy poverty
- Housing needs
- Electrification of transport
- Etc.



*Hvide Sande Community Foundation - Denmark*



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## Benefits of local action in practice: collaboration

- Local tenders to support local development of renewables
  - Community benefit fund in Eeklo
  - Provision of services to municipality & citizens
  - Direct citizen participation
  - Investment opportunities by the Municipality
- Joint investment by cooperatives and municipalities
  - Joint investment in 6 wind turbines (€25m) between Ecopower/Courant d’Air and municipalities of Amel/Büllingen
- Strategic partners for the energy transition



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## Benefits of local action: community ownership of infrastructure

The Old



The New



## Benefits of local action : energy communities engaging in emerging activities

Micro-grids /virtual power plants



Flexibility / aggregation



Electrical vehicle sharing



Peer-to-peer trading



## Just some of the challenges

### Practical:

- Lack of information
- Access to finance
- Public participation / engagement / understanding

### Policy/regulatory:

- No recognition / coherent plan / approach across different levels of govt
- Grids – lack of capacity and / or discrimination
- Complex land use / urban planning frameworks
- Lack of transparency - info and guidance
- Unstable / changing support schemes for renewables
- overburdensome licensing requirements / barriers to competition

# The EU clean energy package: opportunities for citizens

1. Acknowledgment (i.e. definition) + non-discriminatory access to ‘all organised markets’
2. Consideration for energy communities in renewables support schemes
3. A right to engage in energy sharing
4. Requirement to develop ‘enabling frameworks’ for energy communities in order to address barriers
  - Streamlined, simplified administrative procedures, including a single administrative contact point
  - Enhanced access to information (technical and financial)
  - Integration of energy communities into spatial planning frameworks
  - Regulatory support for local collaboration between municipalities and citizen initiatives
  - Focus on tenants and energy poverty \
5. PENDING - Stronger basis to own, establish, lease, autonomously manage ‘community networks’ (i.e. micro-grids)



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## Recommendations for EUSALP

1. Acknowledge energy communities, their benefits, and the challenges they face
2. A safe space (bikelane) for energy communities in the market
3. Citizens, cooperatives and local authorities to put pressure on national governments for favorable enabling policies on energy communities
4. Integrate support for energy communities and public participation into regional and local policies on renewables

*If you want to know more, please contact us!*

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