

Annual report 2020

European Federation of
citizen energy cooperatives



Foreword

2020 was an extraordinary year for REScoop.eu, as it was for all of us around the world.

COVID-19 has changed completely the way we live and work, probably on a permanent basis. The pandemic seems to be linked to Climate Change and the ever-increasing impact of human activity on nature. Wildfires, heat waves and severe winters, floods and droughts across the globe gave us an insight to what even a plus 1,5°C Climate means. The COP 26 in Glasgow was postponed to this year, Trump didn't get re-elected, although many Americans think otherwise, and Brexit became reality ...

But even in the darkest hour, people stand up and work together for a better future, where no-one is left behind.

Our membership has kept growing: today the federation represents directly or indirectly 1.900 REScoops and about 1.25 million citizens. At the beginning of 2020 the board of REScoop.eu was facing a seemingly inevitable downsizing of the federation and the number of people employed, but the tide turned when several EU funded projects were approved or prolonged. The European Climate Foundation has also put its trust in us by funding several projects. Now, instead of eight people, we employ 13 and you will hopefully notice the difference the coming years.

Early 2021 we completed the FLEXcoop Horizon 2020 project, but the work on community-based flexibility continues in the REScoop VPP project. This is just one of [many ongoing projects](#): check them out on our new website! Our communications team does a great job keeping you informed on the website, with the newsletters and through social media.

In terms of advocacy: our working group and the Community Power Coalition in Brussels have worked together to ensure the transposition of the Clean Energy for All Europeans directives is delivered in as many member states as possible. Proper transposition remains an issue of great concern to all of you. How member states will install the enabling framework and remove obstacles for energy communities will be critical to the growth of our movement across the EU.

Although the team has been working from home since mid March 2020, we managed to participate in even more events - representing your voice. And we will continue to make sure citizens' views are heard. Our federation is now accredited to participate in the COP climate summits. This year we plan to co-organise a side event with the UK federations at the COP26 in Glasgow. With the support of the European Climate Foundation and Patagonia we will reach out to all those European citizens who haven't yet had the chance to engage in the energy transition by joining a renewable energy community.

Dirk Vansintjan, President REScoop.eu

Introduction

REScoop.eu is the European federation of citizen energy cooperatives. Our network represents 1.900 energy cooperatives and 1.250.000 people across Europe. Energy cooperatives are key in leading the energy transition, making it possible for citizens to participate in renewable energy, energy efficiency and other technologies that will decarbonize our energy system.

The need for climate action has never been greater. The next few years will be crucial if we are to safeguard our future to address both the democratic and the climate crises. We need to see radical changes in the way energy is generated and used. Citizen support will be critical in achieving that transition, and cooperatives, by putting citizens at the heart of the energy system, are the best way we know of mobilising that support.

If you are already a REScoop member we want to thank you for all your support, without which we could not operate. If you are a cooperative, association, or group of citizens and are not yet a REScoop member we urge you to consider joining. The more members we have, the stronger our voice will be.

Our main objectives:

1. Ensuring citizens' voices are heard in energy policy debates
2. Fostering international collaboration between citizen energy cooperatives
3. Helping cooperatives to grow and prosper
4. Promoting the cooperative model

Our board of eight energy cooperatives, elected for four year terms, sets our policy and direction. In 2021, a new board of directors will be elected by the General Assembly. We are supported by a thirteen-person team working in Brussels and Berchem (Belgium).

REScoop.EU

in numbers



Numbers: 31 March 2021

European projects we worked on in 2020

WiseGRID develops and tests smart grid integration technology to maximize renewable, decentralised energy production. This project came to an end in 2020.

Ecco aims to enhance the relationships with farmers and supports them in setting up energy cooperatives.

FLEXCoop developed demand response schemes which enable cooperatives to take up the role of aggregator. This project came to an end at the beginning of 2021.

ECF Toolbox created and collected tools, reports and papers aiming to support a local, community-led renewable energy revolution in Europe. This project came to an end in 2020.

The **Clean Energy for EU Islands Secretariat** is an initiative supported by the European Commission aimed at supporting the clean energy transition of European islands.

COMPILE shows how energy islands (microgrids) can help decarbonise our energy supply whilst creating environmental and socio-economic benefits.

ECF Citizen-led renovation brings together cooperatives with expertise on citizen-led renovation, feeds into policy debates centered around energy efficiency and citizen-led renovation.

ECF Definition supports REScoop.eu members in France, Portugal, Greece, Poland, Italy, Belgium and The Netherlands with the transposition of the Clean Energy Package, particularly when it comes to implementing good definitions for energy communities and providing enabling frameworks.

Through **REScoopVPP**, REScoop.eu supports the set-up of a community-driven virtual power plant that can actually provide flexibility services to the grid.

cVPP aims for an effective implementation of demand-response solutions in energy communities.

COME RES supports the implementation of the community energy provisions of the Clean Energy Package in nine EU Member States.

EUCENA aims to accelerate the energy transition in Central-Eastern Europe by setting up an annual summer school where energy communities can exchange experiences and learn new skills.

AgroFossilFree will show how farmers can benefit from innovative business models (like the cooperative business model) that help mitigate climate change and decarbonise our economies whilst keeping value in the local communities.

RE/SOURCED aims to set-up a microgrid (a so-called energy island) in Zwevegem, a small town in West Flanders, Belgium.

In **OneNET**, we liaise with DSOs and TSOs to explore how cooperatives can support the implementation of a decentralised energy system.

STEPS aims to strengthen the competitiveness of North-West European SMEs, including energy cooperatives, working on innovative storage solutions.

New projects we started/will start in 2021

ECF Communications aims to widely disseminate inspirational stories, tools and best practices to support citizens that want to start a renewable energy community and give them answers and motivation they need to launch local energy projects.

REScoop.eu is the project coordinator of **SCCALE 203050**, a Horizon 2020 project that aims to develop a set of tools, resources and coaching techniques to support the set-up and operation of energy communities. The project aims to strengthen the collaboration between energy cooperatives and local authorities including cities and municipalities.

A growing number of energy cooperatives are trying to alleviate energy poverty, bringing forward innovative schemes and business models. **CEES** aims to identify the existing best practises and wants to build a narrative around this important challenge. REScoop.eu is in charge of communication and EU policy work.

Some highlights

- **Diversification and growth** of our funding
- **Converted to a 100% digital working space**
- **Representation in 143 events**
- **6 women & 7 men in the team**
- **8 women & 8 men in the board**
- **Publication of the Community Energy guide:**
A practical guide to reclaiming power
- **Publication of Flexibility handbook:**
Flexibility services for energy cooperatives
- **New visual identity**
- **Launch of a new website & toolbox**





Financial report

By Daan Creupelandt and Mark Luntley

The team of REScoop.eu keeps growing and so does the budget. The total income for the year 2020 was 932.266,02 euro whilst the total expenses were 742.610,48 euro. As a result REScoop.eu ended the financial year with a surplus of 189.655,54 euro. The need for community energy has never been greater and we feel that funding agencies finally start recognizing that too. Total assets have increased significantly over the past year as we have won a new series of projects. Not only do we handle more projects, we diversified the work programmes too. We have been working on Horizon 2020 and Interreg NWE, and we did projects with the European Climate Foundation, die Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit and Patagonia. Sales went up through the Clean Energy for EU Islands Secretariat and we secured more sustainable funding through our new membership fee structure.

Income and spending in the year

	2019	2020
Total income	€755.733	€932.266
Total spending	€805.783	€742.610
Surplus	-€50.010	€189.655

Summary Balance Sheet

	2019	2020
Total Assets	€974.139	€1.802.044
Total Liabilities	€205.158	€224.621
Accumulated Surplus	€143.465	€333.121

Advocacy

In 2020, REScoop.eu's advocacy efforts focused heavily on shaping the translation of new EU legislation on energy communities at the national level to benefit our members. According to Directive 2018/2001 (The Renewable Energy Directive II) and Directive 2019/944 (the Electricity Market Design Directive), Member States must incorporate definitions of energy communities, enabling frameworks, and other supportive policies and regulations, into national law. The rules in the Electricity Market Design Directive were supposed to be written into national law by the end of 2020, while the rules in the Renewable Energy Directive II should be in place at national level by the end of June 2021. Our efforts have focused on ensuring national governments properly understand these new EU rules, and the development of appropriate and timely national frameworks for energy communities to thrive.

In furtherance of this objective, we focused heavily on shaping the understanding of definitions of 'renewable energy communities' and 'citizen energy communities'. We drafted a Question and Answer briefing, which has provided the basis for REScoop.eu's position on the definitions. We also collaborated with ClientEarth to produce a comprehensive Transposition Guidance document in order to identify best practice for how to write EU rules on energy communities into national law. With these resources, we provided expertise to the European Commission, national regulators, our members, and other national partners in the transposition process of a number of different Member States.

We also collaborated with partner organisations in the Community Power Coalition to communicate the new opportunities provided by EU legislation. Together with Friends of the Earth Europe and Energy Cities, we produced a vision statement, as well as a practical guidebook that can help citizens unlock new opportunities available through EU legislation.

2020 also saw the emergence of Europe's Green New Deal, as well as efforts to combat against the economic effects of COVID-19. Here, REScoop.eu has focused on getting energy communities acknowledged as a priority in flagship initiatives such as the Renovation Wave, as well as the COVID Recovery Plan. Finally, we provided a structured response to the EEAG and GBER Commission consultation and pointed out that the state aid guidelines should be revised in a way that they will incorporate the vital objective of citizen participation highlighted in the CEP.

In 2021, REScoop.eu's advocacy efforts will focus on ensuring all EU Member States write their national rules on energy communities on time. Unfortunately, many countries are behind in this process, and they will need to be held accountable. At the same time, we will need to focus on monitoring the practical implementation of new rules for energy communities to ensure they actually benefit REScoops. We will also focus our efforts on ensuring financing for energy communities, for instance through the various instruments under the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), and the revision of the State aid guidelines. 2021 will also likely see an expansion into new policy topics, with a new emphasis on energy efficiency and flexibility.

By Josh Roberts and Stavroula Pappa



Some numbers

8 policy papers

32 advocacy meetings & events

22 transposition support meetings
with our members

The Co-operative Values

By Sara Tachelet

It's the 7 ICA principles that make a cooperative a true one. They set the basis for our shared ethical values and for our joint cooperative identity. The principles are featured in the REScoop.eu charter, as we try to put those to practise too.



Voluntary and Open Membership

Membership to a **citizen energy cooperative** is open to everyone, irrespective of gender, social, religious or political beliefs.

The staff working in **REScoop.eu** has different nationalities and backgrounds. Through the EUCENA project, we are actively promoting a gender-just energy transition. Through CEES we will look into social inclusiveness.



Concern for Community

While focusing on member needs, **citizen energy cooperatives** work for the sustainable development of their communities. In particular during the coronavirus pandemic, we saw many members supporting their local neighborhoods.

In 2020, **REScoop.eu** started the citizen-led renovation project, promoting a citizen perspective to the EU's "renovation wave", which has enormous potential to improve lives - especially the most vulnerable - and create green jobs, as well as reduce carbon emissions. In 2021, we will continue to focus on the theme of energy efficiency and energy poverty.



Members' Economic Participation

Members of a **citizen energy cooperative** contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative.

Our membership fees are set by the members at the annual general meeting. They vary according to the size and maturity of the cooperative that wants to join in. Members of REScoop.eu benefit directly from the activities we bring forward including EU representation and advocacy work, networking opportunities, participation in EU projects, promotion, etc.



Autonomy and Independence

Citizen energy cooperatives are autonomous and independent with a board elected by its members.

Just like our members, **we** operate independently and retain our autonomy. The team takes charge of the daily operations of the association in close collaboration with the Board of Directors. Together we report back to the others.



Education, Training, and Information

Citizen energy cooperatives provide education and training in order to effectively contribute to the development of their cooperatives.

REScoop.eu supports academic research and innovation by participating in various European programs and facilitating the exchange of expertise among researchers working on the topic of community energy. One of our main objectives is to promote the cooperative model in the energy sector by informing a wide audience about our work and that of our members.



Democratic Member Control

Citizen energy cooperatives apply the "one member, one vote" principle, allowing for democratic control by the members.

Full members of **REScoop.eu** get one vote at the annual general meeting, regardless of the fee they paid. All members are encouraged to attend the annual general meeting and participate in the discussions that will shape the future of our association.



Cooperation Among Cooperatives

Citizen energy cooperatives choose collaboration over competition.

REScoop.eu coordinates the collaboration between members in different thematic working groups. The aim of the working groups is to provide our members direct access to experts and to build a forum for exchange among participants.

Flexibility working group

Innovative demand response tools and novel business models for energy cooperatives

Advocacy working group

Representing the voice of citizens and renewable energy cooperatives to European policy makers

E-mobility working group

Co-operative network for sustainable mobility. www.themobilityfactory.eu

Citizen-led renovation working group

Collaboration on sustainable home renovation by energy cooperatives



Highlighting some of our partnerships

Community Power Coalition

REScoop.eu is one of the main drivers of the Community Power Coalition, a diverse network of like-minded organisations who share a common goal of promoting the development of citizen and community ownership in the urgent transformation towards a 100% renewable energy system. The Coalition includes associations representing energy cooperatives, networks of cities and local authorities, consumer organisations, the renewable energy industry, legal experts and several environmental NGOs.

www.communitypower.eu



Right to Energy Coalition

REScoop.eu is working to reduce energy poverty. In 2017 we joined with trade unions, anti-poverty groups, social housing providers, and environmental and health organisations to form the Right to Energy Coalition.

www.righttoenergy.org



Cooperatives Europe & the International Cooperative Alliance

REScoop.eu is one of the sectoral organisation of Cooperatives Europe (the European umbrella organisation grouping cooperatives from all sectors) and the driving force behind the Energy Working Group. We work with Cooperatives Europe and the International Cooperative Alliance to promote the cooperative business model across Europe and beyond.

www.coopseurope.coop

www.ica.coop/en



Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy

The EU Covenant of Mayors is a network of thousands of local governments who have committed to implementing EU climate and energy objectives. Through our partnership with the Covenant of Mayors we promote the collaboration between local authorities and energy cooperatives to empower cities and communities in taking local climate and energy action.

www.covenantofmayors.eu/en



Observer organisation UNFCCC

REScoop.eu is officially recognised as an observer organization of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This observer status allows us to closely follow negotiations like the annual UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP).



Patagonia

In 2020, REScoop.eu started collaborating with Patagonia on a large campaign to broadly promote community energy across Europe, with the release of a community energy movie as its apotheosis in 2021.

www.patagonia.com/activism



Our strategy & services

By Myriam Castanié

After the launch of our new visual identity last year to make REScoop.eu future-proof, we've also begun to develop a forward-looking strategy for the organisation. Through this, we want to make sure that our actions really land where they have the highest impact - for our members, Europe's citizens, and the transition of society as a whole. The strategy is still under construction, but we can already tell you this much: We're looking into ways to support more cooperatives & citizen energy projects, find synergies between different economic sectors, and explore partnerships that can help us do our work even better. This in addition to the services our members are already used to.

Speaking of services

The experience we've built within REScoop.eu over the past years is starting to make the rounds. More and more organizations - citizen groups and municipalities in particular - are contacting us to help them set up energy communities, train their leaders of tomorrow, and support them on finding financing solutions for their energy projects. With this in mind, REScoop.eu is expanding its service offer to members and non-members, including (but not limited to) community coaching, support on setting up energy communities, strategy, financing support and more.

If you think we could help you or a community you're aware of, don't hesitate to get in touch with myriam.castanie@rescoop.eu.



organise your group



figure out what type of project is best suited for you depending on your context



develop your strategy



with practical tools to help you on your way



learn how to finance your energy community project



learn about technical skills needed for your energy community project



work better with your municipality and citizens

and more!

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REScoop.eu members





REScoop.eu partners

REScoop.eu teams up with a broad range of partners in order to strengthen our vision and increase our impact.



REScoop.eu funders

REScoop.eu gratefully acknowledges funding from:

Our members

See previous page.



European Climate Initiative
EUI



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