

Press release

The buildings Directive: Parliament votes to empower citizens and their energy communities in carrying out renovations.

14 March 2023, Brussels - Today, the European Parliament voted on its position on the European Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD), which outlines the framework to support building emissions reductions (almost 40% of Greenhouse Gas Emissions), and reduce sky-rocketing energy bills. In its position, Parliament recognises the key role that citizen-led renovations play in this process, and makes it easier for energy communities to access financing and administrative support so that they can carry out these renovations.

As the European Federation of citizen energy cooperatives, we have been striving for this result, together with Climate Action Network Europe (CAN), and the European Environmental Bureau (EEB). Despite the hurdles that energy communities face in the renovation field, we see first-hand the positive impact that citizen-led renovations and community heating have on citizens, their energy bills, our climate, and how it can reunite our often fragmented communities. We therefore particularly appreciate the hard work of Parliament's teams to include wording on energy communities, [citizen-led renovations](#), and neighbourhood-based approaches throughout the EPBD. Among other provisions, Member States will need to ensure a level-playing field in terms of access to financing for energy communities. This partially removes a major obstacle to citizen-led renovations, as their non-for-profit nature often excludes them from public tendering. However, unfortunately annex III of the text, which defines the criteria of a zero emission building, opens the door to a fossil-dependent grid, such as hydrogen. It also creates arbitrary technical and economic criteria to the detriment of renewable energy communities. This must be improved as a priority during negotiations.

Dirk Vansintjan, President of REScoop.eu, said: *'With this vote, the Parliament is putting the ownership of renovations back into the hands of citizens and their energy communities. This vote proves that both Parliament and the Commission see the value of citizen-led renovations. They acknowledge that a bottom-up approach is a key solution to this energy crisis, and to create a just transition'*. However, Vansintjan also cautioned that *'the inclusion of fossil-fuel boilers in the text proves that many policy-makers have not been able to shake off their addiction to polluting energy sources,'*

Now that Parliament has decided on its position, the EPBD will go into negotiations with the Member States in the so-called 'trilogues'. REScoop.eu therefore urges national governments to follow the ambition of Parliament, and to ensure that energy communities' particular needs are taken into account for tendering, while ridding our homes of boilers running on fossil fuels.

*** end ***

Contact

For more information, please contact Felix Kriedemann (felix.kriedemann@rescoop.eu - +32 486 94 25 47)

For media inquiries, please contact Sara Tachelet (sara.tachelet@rescoop.eu - +32 493 400 935)