

Press release

European Energy Communities Forum, May 2024

Energy communities crafting connections and breaking barriers for a sustainable future

Brussels, 19/02/2024 - In the midst of current challenges - democratic backsliding, inflation, the energy price crisis, and escalating energy poverty - a critical question emerges: are people weary of environmental policies, or are they rightfully frustrated for lacking a seat at the table? Research consistently reveals that citizen involvement in co-designing climate policies not only addresses this frustration but also results in the adoption of highly ambitious measures and proposals. This sentiment extends to accepting new renewable energy projects in their neighborhoods. When citizens unite in "energy communities," comprising citizens, SMEs and local authorities, they ensure locally anchored ownership of renewable energy production facilities, fostering acceptance for renewables as they co-invest in clean energy projects and collectively produce their own energy.

European Energy Communities Forum in Prague: Building Blocks of Energy Democracy

This year's European Energy Communities Forum is set to take place in Prague, from the 13th to the 15th of May, organized in collaboration with our member, UKEN. Under the theme "Building blocks of energy democracy" the forum aims to explore the transformative potential of energy communities as catalysts for change, breaking down barriers between communities and fostering sustainable connections

Inspired by Prague's iconic Charles Bridge, symbolizing the connection between East and West, and the city's rich history of crafts and inventions, the event will delve into the role of energy communities in bridging people from diverse backgrounds. In the face of increasing polarization and climate and energy injustices, democratically governed local projects can spark hope, trust, and contribute to a sustainable future.

Dirk Vansintjan, president of REScoop.eu explains the choice for Prague: *"In co-hosting the European Energy Communities Forum with our Czech member, UKEN, we not only celebrate the strength and importance of national community energy networks but also draw inspiration from Prague's rich history of crafts and inventions. We believe that energy communities, much like the artisans of the past, can now shape a future where everyone has a stake in clean energy."*

Three days of collaboration and inspiration

The three-day event will bring together energy communities from across Europe for workshops, exchanges, and interactive sessions. How can citizens produce their own energy collectively? How can energy communities promote gender equality and fight energy poverty? These are some of the many topics that the three-day Gathering will cover, through a programme tailored to different levels of expertise and capabilities.

David Blažek, coordinator of UKEN explains what this event means for their network: *"We are honored to be partnering with REScoop at the European Energy Communities Forum 2024 in Prague. Community energy in Czechia is at its very beginning. Starting this year, energy communities can officially begin thriving in Czechia, slowly paving the way towards a fairer and cleaner energy system. Holding a conference like this provides a significant motivational boost for us and the emerging Czech energy communities to continue working towards our shared vision".*

Interested parties can register their intention to participate through the following link: <https://www.energycommunitiesforum.eu/>

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About REScoop.eu

REScoop.eu currently represents over 2250 energy cooperatives and 1,500,000 European citizens, demonstrating that Europe's citizens are ready to "take energy into their own hands". These millions of European citizens, organised in thousands of cooperatives are proposing solutions from below and driving a movement that is sweeping across Europe, from the Czech Republic to Sweden and from France to Bulgaria, showing how the energy transition can - in fact - be green and fair for all!

About UKEN

Unie komunitní energetiky (UKEN) is a coalition that supports and facilitates the creation of renewable energy communities in the Czech Republic. The ultimate goal of this Community Energy Union is to create a clean and decentralised future for the Czech energy system.

Press Contacts

Czech Republic, Balkans and South-East Europe

Anna Michalčáková, anna.michalcakova@uken.cz

Europe

Sara Tachelet - +32 4 93 400 935, sara.tachelet@rescoop.eu