

Ambition Statement

Gender Power working group

REScoop.eu, the European federation of citizen energy cooperatives:

- ❖ acknowledges that climate change threatens our collective prosperity or even survival;
- ❖ is convinced that the welfare of our societies requires a swift transition to 100% renewables with democratic control;
- ❖ recognises that the transition to a sustainable and resilient future energy system should "leave no one behind";
- ❖ appreciates that the Clean Energy Package has recognised the role of citizens and energy communities by putting them at the heart of the energy transition;
- ❖ aligns with the sustainable development goals: SDG 5 for gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls in all their diversity and SDG 7 for access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all;
- ❖ recognises that energy cooperatives are rooted in broader visions of social justice and community development;
- ❖ is aware that the transition to a sustainable and just energy system requires holistic changes, which means dismantling existing unjust societal or organisational structures, ending discrimination and subordination attitudes, and creating other alternative cultures, structures and practices;
- ❖ understands gender as a form of socially constructed difference related to various inequalities, traditionally between women and men, while recognising that gender roles change over time;
- ❖ accepts that in the broader society much needs to be done to eliminate prejudice and all practices that are based on stereotypical roles or on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of certain genders, in order to achieve true equality and give everyone the same opportunities to realise their full potential.

Therefore the overall mission of the signatories of this statement is the following:

“We aim to contribute to a just energy transition, promoting the meaningful participation of people of all genders on equal terms, as active actors and beneficiaries of the energy transition, which would result in an improvement in the quality of life for all.”

To contribute to the promotion of a gender-just energy transition, we recognise and emphasise the responsibilities of all energy cooperatives, and other actors to:

- ❖ **mobilise the democratic and inclusive nature** of energy cooperatives to address the interests and needs of all energy stakeholders to become a heterogeneous group;
- ❖ bring out and **recognise the voices, faces, needs and interests** of women and **people of all genders** in the community energy sector;
- ❖ create **visibility and awareness** around the **impact of (gender-) inequality** in the energy system, in general, and energy communities, in particular;
- ❖ take all **appropriate measures**, including specific policies, to **modify or abolish** existing regulations, customs, structures and practices which constitute **discrimination against women and non-binary people**;
- ❖ integrate a **gender perspective** in all their operation areas.

These principles may translate into tangible activities by energy cooperatives, like the following ones:

- ❖ use gender-sensitive language, i.e. language reflecting gender equality, as well as graphs and pictures in all channels of internal and external communication;
- ❖ include the principles of gender justice and gender equality in their statutes, if not already included therein, and ensure the practical implementation of these principles through specific policies and other appropriate means (e.g. trainings, budgets, etc);
- ❖ engage in activities aimed at structural reforms, equal opportunities, and positive measures to promote the position of persons of all genders, in particular in the governing bodies, and to create a mindset and culture conducive to equality;
- ❖ contribute to the regular collection, analysis, and presentation of data disaggregated by age, sex, socio-economic and other relevant indicators for use in the development, planning and implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes within the organisation.
- ❖ **adopt temporary special measures**, such as quotas or special discounts, to accelerate de facto equality of all genders, these measures shall not be considered as discriminatory, as they must cease when the objectives of equal opportunities and equal treatment have been achieved.

Moreover, we acknowledge the following activities as key to accelerate gender awareness and the progress of equality:

- ❖ promote a transnational mentoring programme for women and people of all genders, covering all types of training, and retraining, formal and non-formal, to enhance their social, organisational, technical and political skills;
- ❖ involve centres for gender studies and research, academic and educational institutions, non-governmental organisations, especially women's organisations and LGBTQIA+/non-binary people's organisations, and all other civil society actors, to strengthen the knowledge of gender analysis, develop and test appropriate gender-sensitive indicators and research methodologies, as well as to monitor and evaluate the progress in achieving gender equality in the overall operation;
- ❖ **map and connect** the various (inter)national, regional and local networks working on **gender inequality, energy poverty**, including **social and solidarity economy** initiatives and organisations.

In line with the **principles of energy democracy**, we acknowledge diversity and are open to the diverse needs and aspirations of citizens. We wish to go beyond the focus on "women empowerment", which may, in fact, have a disempowering effect. Instead, we focus on the **cultural and structural changes needed for (gender-)just energy communities**, while maintaining a critical perspective and transparency towards new injustices that may emerge.

We recognise that for a sustainable and just energy transition, everyone has a role to play and a responsibility to speak up and act against current injustices and unsustainable practices, while also acknowledging that individual actions must ultimately be connected to systemic efforts.

Therefore, we commit to

- ❖ integrating a gender equality clause in our Statutes by 2023, or as soon as possible;
- ❖ reflecting the principle of gender equality in the composition of our governing bodies by 2023, or in our next Boards of Directors and Executive Boards, and;
- ❖ aiming our efforts at achieving a gender-balanced and just membership by 2030.

This Ambition Statement is open for signature by all REScoop.eu members.

Last modified on 15/12/2021