



# **PUTTING PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES AT THE HEART OF EUROPE'S ENERGY TRANSFORMATION**

**COMMUNITY POWER COALITION - VISION STATEMENT**





## WHO WE ARE

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

## OUR SHARED VALUES

Europe's current energy system, which is dominated by a small number of large utilities, accounts for over 30% of Europe's overall greenhouse gas emissions. In order to address global challenges such as climate change and socio-economic inequities, Europe's future energy system must be sustainable, carbon-free, socially fair, publicly owned and controlled by local communities and people. We believe that a decentralised and 100% renewable energy system is both possible and necessary - while our energy demand must decrease. We demand an end to the control over our energy systems by a handful of large utilities, and we demand that EU citizens are put at the heart of our energy transformation.

The potential for people - individually and through their community, public entities and small enterprises - to actively engage in the energy transition is significant. By 2050, at least half of EU citizens could be producing their own renewable electricity, meeting at least 45% of the EU's electricity demand<sup>1</sup>.

The Community Power Coalition believes in locally and publicly owned energy projects aimed to address local socio-economic needs, based on voluntary and open membership, democratic control, each member's economic participation, and fair and equitable benefit-sharing. Community ownership empowers citizens to make decisions about their energy future. Community ownership of renewable energy production maintains benefits from renewables locally by creating jobs, boosting local investment, providing services such as education, encouraging citizens to save energy, and fighting against energy poverty. By driving public acceptance of renewables, energy communities can bring people together to benefit both their societies and the energy system. The potential of energy communities lies not only with production and distribution of renewable energy but also encourages energy savings.

Market-based approaches alone are insufficient to drive a successful energy transition. Renewable energy sources are common goods, and all citizens must have a fair opportunity to take ownership and benefit from participating in the energy transition. Furthermore, the energy transition must be based on fairness and solidarity, where no one is left behind, including vulnerable and energy poor households.

# WE DEMAND A FULL AND TIMELY TRANSPOSITION OF THE EU CLEAN ENERGY PACKAGE

## 1. ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF CITIZEN AND RENEWABLE ENERGY COMMUNITIES IN NATIONAL LEGISLATION THROUGH ROBUST AND CLEAR DEFINITIONS

National definitions should acknowledge citizen and renewable energy communities as a different type of market actor, which emphasizes open and democratic ownership and control, and aims to provide community benefits – rather than profit making. National definitions should ensure effective control by citizens, local authorities and small businesses and guarantee autonomy – preventing bigger companies from setting up and controlling energy communities. The definition should clearly distinguish energy communities as a way to organise participation of citizens - rather than focus on technical activities.

## 2. STRONG INCLUSION OF CITIZENS AND COMMUNITIES IN NATIONAL CLIMATE AND ENERGY PLANNING

In their 2030 National Energy and Climate Plans, EU Member States should adopt ambitious objectives for renewables production by energy communities, self-consumers and cities. Citizens should be allowed to actively participate in developing and monitoring national and local climate and energy planning.

## 3. RESPECT FOR NEW RIGHTS OF SELF-CONSUMERS AND ENERGY COMMUNITIES, SUPPORTED BY A STRONG ENABLING FRAMEWORK AT NATIONAL LEVEL

Member States must ensure that national regulations and market rules entitle citizens and energy communities to exercise their rights. Regulators need to ensure that the rights of citizens and energy communities are respected, and that barriers to participating in the market are removed.

## 4. ENSURE FAIR ACCESS BY RENEWABLE ENERGY COMMUNITIES TO RENEWABLES SUPPORT SCHEMES

National and EU (e.g. State aid) rules should include specific provisions to ensure renewable energy communities can access renewable energy support schemes on fair and equal terms.

## 5. SUPPORT A FAIR AND INCLUSIVE ENERGY TRANSITION, MAKING SURE NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND

EU Member States must develop programmes, including financial schemes, to ensure vulnerable and energy poor citizens are able to participate economically in energy communities. Rules and incentives (e.g. for energy sharing and collective self-consumption) should ensure energy communities can develop solidarity schemes to benefit vulnerable and lower-income members.

## 6. ACKNOWLEDGE VALUE THAT ENERGY CITIZENS AND COMMUNITIES CAN PROVIDE TO THE ENERGY SYSTEM

Remuneration for renewable electricity and flexibility provided to the grid, and charges (network or otherwise), should incentivise citizens and energy communities to provide the grid operator with services that reduce the need for long-term investments in the grid.

## 7. CONTINUED SUPPORT FROM THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS FOR ENERGY COMMUNITIES AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

The EU Commission and Parliament should continue the work of their predecessors in monitoring, strengthening and guaranteeing a place for community energy in Europe's energy future.

## 8. CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO CONTINUE SUPPORTING COMMUNITY ENERGY PROJECTS

EU Member States should adequately translate the Renewable Energy Directive provisions that foresee "regulatory and capacity-building support is provided to public authorities in enabling and setting up renewable energy communities, and in helping authorities to participate directly".



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.foeeurope.org/potential-energy-citizens-european-union-260916>

# MEMBERS INCLUDING



Friends of the Earth Europe gratefully acknowledges financial assistance from the European Commission (LIFE programme), the European Climate Foundation, and the European Climate Initiative (EUKI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) – who have partially financed this publication. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and cannot be regarded as reflecting the position of any of the funders mentioned above.



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based on a decision of the German Bundestag

