



City–Citizens Dialogues for Community Energy

Crete/Greece edition



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Energy Communities and Local Government Organizations - Creating partnerships for local development and fair transition

This online event organised by Minoan Energy Community is part of a series of live chats with citizens and authority officials who can play a role in energy communities, as a European sharing of experience project, allowing for direct exchanges between speakers and the audience.

On July 25, the online workshop entitled "Energy Communities and Local Government Organizations - Creating partnerships for local development and fair transition" took place in the framework of the Life - Local Ownership of Power (LIFE LOOP) project. It took place in the framework of the Life - Local Ownership of Power (LIFE LOOP) project. The meeting lasted 2 hours and 30 minutes and it was completed on schedule.

The coordinator of the meeting was Ms. Ermioni Gialiti, special advisor to the Regional Governor and Board member of the Minoan Energy Community. The president of the Minoan Energy Community (MEC), Mr. Charalambos Giannopoulos, welcomed the meeting and referred to the role of broad-based energy communities, as well as the **new legislative framework that currently exists in Greece**. He made a brief reference to the activities of MEC, the first energy community in Crete and the largest in Greece.

This pioneering is accompanied by the corresponding obstacles that the community has managed to overcome from its foundation until today, paving the way for collectives in the energy landscape. Finally, the president focused on **the convergence and cooperation**



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between Local Government Organizations and Energy Communities with the aim of a fair energy transition.

Then the floor was taken by Ms. Antonia Proka, representative of the European Federation of Energy Cooperatives REScoop.eu, who referred to the importance of supporting the Municipalities from the Energy Communities and vice versa. **This cooperation can lead to the joint development of energy-saving and production projects with the ultimate goal of the energy transition.** Finally, she emphasized that for Rescoop.eu, it is crucial to engage citizens in the energy sector, as they can benefit from the development of projects and benefit the wider society.

The meeting continued with a greeting from Ms. Ioanna Angelaki, member of Electra Energy, who made a brief reference to the LIFE LOOP project, the main objective of which is to bring citizens and Local Government Organizations to the center of the energy transition and highlight the decisive role they can and must play in order to make the energy transition truly fair and inclusive. It was underlined subsequently, that in order to achieve the above as much as possible, both **citizens and Local Government Organizations should**, taking advantage of the common "ground" they share, **join forces and work together for the benefit of their local society.**

The scheduled presentations started with that of Mr. Christos Vrettos, member of REScoop.eu, who referred to the available financial tools so as to achieve collaborations between Energy Communities and Local Government Organizations and to the priority given in the current decade to funding projects that aim to save energy and fight climate change. Then he informed the participants about the [European financing tracker developed by Rescoop.eu](#) which aims to identify available support programs for energy communities. He presented the current situation in the European Union regarding the support of Energy Communities - from its 18 member states and focused on Greece and the support programs that exist. He presented examples of good practice from other Member States, such as supporting broad-based energy communities, the establishment of strong social criteria in tenders for project funding, information campaigns and others. Finally, he closed his presentation by saying that the energy transition should be fair, democratic, and come from the base of society.

Afterwards, Ms. Angelaki presented the European LIFE LOOP project, the central aim of which is to bring together energy communities and citizen initiatives with the municipalities and regions. The four agencies share common ground, they address the same local community and the main purpose is that they act for the common good and not for profit. A reference followed, then, to the individual objectives of the project, which include, among others, education, capacity



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building, and empowerment of the energy communities, of the interested bodies and local government organizations, treatment of regulatory obstacles to the development of community energy in municipalities, increasing the equal participation of all genders in the energy communities and also securing funding for the creation of new energy communities. A brief mention was made to the partners of the LIFE LOOP project.

The main part of the presentation focused on the ways of cooperation between the energy communities and citizen initiatives with local government organizations. In particular, three main axes of cooperation between the above bodies were mentioned, including the participation of local government organizations in energy communities, either actively engaging in the process of creation or by providing support. Specific supportive measures already implemented in the European context were mentioned, such as the establishment of favorable conditions, the development of workshops and useful and targeted tools, the provision of start-up funding, but also the provision of public land and human resources. Ms. Angelaki also referred to the networking and collaboration tool for Municipalities and Energy Communities which evolved in the context of LIFE LOOP. This match-making tool will be made available through a platform and can be utilized by Local Government Organizations. Summarizing, she said that the above methods of cooperation should not be evaluated restrictively but should be used holistically as Local Government Organizations can create, participate in, and support Energy Communities, with the ultimate goal of the common good of citizens.

The meeting continued with the speech of Ms. Ermioni Gialiti, who referred to the **phenomenon of energy poverty and the current situation in Greece and Europe**. A brief description was presented of the current legislation of the energy communities, the availability of renewable energy sources on the island of Crete and the occupation of land by large companies in order to develop Renewable Energy projects. Then she presented to the participants the **structure and function of the Minoan Energy Community**, the virtual net metering projects that it has implemented so far and the studies for new Renewable Energy projects prepared by the community members, often with the technical or financial assistance of European programs. Among them are studies of building energy performance upgrade, smart networks, the implementation of biomass projects, the siting of wind farms, power sale projects and others. Emphasis was placed on the role of collective actions for the energy, both through the two European awards the community has received, as well as from the recent integration of the island of Crete into major European countries programs. Something like this, in fact, multiplies the financing possibilities and support for energy actions from the European Forums. On occasion of the inclusion of the Minoan Energy Community and institutional and educational



bodies from Greece and other countries in a new HORIZON program of €20 million, **Crete is chosen in practice as an energy valley of Renewable Energy sources**. This highlights the huge opportunities that exist for implementing pilot practices in areas with strong Renewable Energy potential. In the presentation, it was also emphasized the decisive role of Local Government Organizations, with references to the participation of the Region of Crete and the continuous support it provides throughout this Community course.

The floor was then taken by the Deputy Regional Governor for Environment Mr. Nikos Xilouris who mentioned the goals that have been set in the Strategic Planning of the Region of Crete regarding the energy transition and its practical support to the broad-based energy communities already established (such as MEC) but also those that will be created in the future. He referred to **the coverage of the available energy space in Crete by large companies with strong interests and the lack of space for the development of new Renewable Energy projects from Energy Communities**. Finally, he pointed out the goal of reducing energy expenditure for each individual citizen and the necessity to have a lead in the energy space of Crete (when it is freed) for broad-based energy communities that serve the above objective.

The speeches were concluded with those of Mr. Papadopoulos by the Managing Authority of the "Epirus" program of the Region of Epirus, which **plans to publicize a call for a pilot action to support the energy communities where Local Government Organizations and the energy communities of the Region will participate**. Due to technical problems, it was not possible to connect with the representative of the Central Region of Macedonia, who was unable to give her presentation.

In the last part of the event, an open discussion was held between participants, specifically the executives of the local government and the members of the energy communities. What was presented by the speakers was discussed, the obstacles and difficulties encountered by both sides were presented and strong interest was expressed in the financing tracker tool.

The online meeting closed with the commitment and expectation of future meetings and opportunities to spread knowledge. After the end of the meeting, the presentations were sent to all those who had registered on the corresponding form.