



## **Community Energy as part of the solution**

As COP26 talks move ahead, we are nowhere near the goal of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius<sup>1</sup>. We would like to remind leaders that it is now time to unleash the enormous potential of Community Energy by committing to specific policies in order to support energy communities and foster their development, so as to accelerate and secure a just and clean energy transition that also tackles energy poverty.

Recent developments with soaring fossil fuel and electricity prices indicate that we must move faster towards a 100% renewable energy system, ensuring people's participation. Indeed this is the defining factor of the transition's success, increasing local acceptance of renewable projects as well as the fair allocation and distribution of benefits. Inclusiveness and participation are key elements, in order to move beyond fossil fuels.

Renewable energy sources are common goods. All citizens must have a fair opportunity to take co-ownership and benefit from participating in the energy transition.

The European Community Power Coalition<sup>2</sup>, a network of almost 50 like-minded organisations promoting citizen and community ownership of energy, therefore calls on EU leaders to deliver:

- Sound policies, frameworks, measures and actions, so as to unleash the immense potential of Energy Communities and ensure participation of citizens;
- Immediate financial support, so as to unfold a massive renewable deployment program with citizen and municipalities participation, tackling also energy poverty;
- Investment in deep renovation programmes for energy poor households to provide energy efficient, safe and decent housing for all;
- Subsidised programmes for renewables to make heat pumps and other renewables-based heating systems accessible;
- Action towards a decentralised, fair energy system which puts people and the planet first.

Community and citizen ownership is vital to ensure that the energy transition remains popular and receives political support, as proved also by the latest polling performed by YouGov<sup>3</sup> in 10 European countries, according to which:

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<sup>1</sup> COP26: Praise for updated national climate plans, but 'nowhere near' goal:

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/10/1103972>

<sup>2</sup> Community Power Coalition website: <https://communitypowercoalition.eu/>

<sup>3</sup> ECF (2021), Europeans support new wind and solar projects in their local area:

<https://europeanclimate.org/resources/europeans-support-new-wind-and-solar-projects-in-their-local-area/>



- Across Europe, 86% of people questioned said they would support new wind and solar projects near to where they live. They also expressed a strong interest in joining a local energy cooperative and supported government measures to accelerate the rollout of wind and solar power.
- Across Europe, 61% of those questioned said they would be likely to join an energy cooperative if one was set up in their local area. Support was highest in Romania (85%), Italy (75%), Bulgaria (75%), Poland (74%), Greece (71%) and Spain (69%).
- In contrast, 65% of Europeans oppose the construction of a new nuclear power station and 67% oppose a new oil- or gas-fired power plant being built near to where they live.
- Only 18% of Europeans think their government is doing “all they realistically can to tackle climate change”.

Community ownership of renewables is about creating jobs, boosting local investment, providing services such as education, encouraging citizens to save and manage energy, and tackling energy poverty.

We believe that a decentralised and 100% renewable energy system is both possible and necessary – while our energy demand must decrease. It’s time to put citizens at the heart of our energy transition.

COP26 comes at a critical point for humanity. The climate crisis is accelerating, inequality is on the rise. In order to ensure justice and democracy in the energy transition, priority must be given to people’s participation, especially the most vulnerable. Community energy is key to achieve a fair, inclusive, and democratic energy transition and can contribute significantly in the effort towards limiting global temperature increase below 1,5°C. The energy transition can and must leave no one behind!

Together we can!