

PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING SESSION #2

Wednesday 11 May - 14:30 -17:00

Online – link to be provided in the Outlook invitation

Interpretation in 4 languages: Greek, French, Italian and Portuguese

AGENDA:

- 14:30 – 15:00: introduction and icebreaker exercise in small groups
- 15:00 – 15:50 #1 case presentation + Q&A
- 15:50 – 16:00: break
- 16:00 – 16:50: #2 case presentation + Q&A
- 16:50 – 17:00: closing and next steps



COMMUNITY ENERGY:

HOW CITIES CAN BACK RENEWABLE ENERGY COMMUNITIES?

Energy communities are one of the key elements for achieving the EU's energy transition: By 2050, half of Europe's citizens could be producing up to half of the EU's renewable energy. The contribution and the role of local and regional authorities in changing the power dynamics of the energy market is crucial: influencing who plans, owns, controls and benefits from the new energy infrastructure and technologies. Over the last few decades, local governments have shown that they can have a transformative effect in enabling new business models, changing the way the energy system is governed by encouraging a more direct participation of local communities.

Local and regional authorities can support community energy dynamics in various ways: involving an entire district in changing the energy supply mode and consumption patterns, teaming up with individuals and cooperatives in identifying, financing or operating a series of green projects or engaging citizens in the local planning of energy infrastructure and policies.

In this session, we will be hearing from 2 city examples from Belgium and Croatia: the city of Eeklo and the city of Krizevci.

#1 - The city of Eeklo (20,000 inhabitants) and the ECOPOWER cooperative

Speakers: Fien Vanderbeke (city of Eeklo) and Jan De Pauw (Ecopower cooperative)

Ecopower is a Belgian renewable energy sources cooperative owned partly by the city of Eeklo and its inhabitants. The cooperative issues share and invests in renewable energy production installations such as wind turbines and solar PV. Ecopower also reaches out to local municipalities that have signed the Covenant of Mayors and were the one of the first energy cooperative to discover the potential of cooperatives and local governments collaborating. In addition, in 2016, the city of Eeklo issued a concession contract for the construction of a district heating network supplied by residual heat (including from a local incinerator and hospital) and renewable energy sources with very ambitious criteria: the price of the renewable heat should not exceed that of individual heating with a gas boiler, at least 30% of the grid should be owned by local citizens, the project developer must commit to take initiatives to tackle fuel poverty in the city, switch to 100% renewable heat by 2036.

The city of Eeklo has decided to fight energy poverty in the region by providing 750 people with one pre-financed share of the citizen energy cooperative (Ecopower), based on its 25% ownership of one wind turbine. By doing so these people get all the advantages of full members of Ecopower who co-owns the wind turbine and can use electricity at lower cost, lowering their energy bills and allowing them to pay off energy debts. These members can also save up the cost of an own share (€250) in the cooperative with the savings they make on their energy bill. The initiative shows how you can involve people who struggle with energy bills, providing them with access to renewable and affordable electricity without having to buy a cooperative share worth €250. Without the risk of social stigma, people can become full members of the energy community and pay the cost of the share as they save.



#2 - The city of Krizevci (22,234 inhabitants) and the ZEZ cooperative

Speakers: Mario Rajn (Mayor of the city of Krizevci) and Ivana Mlinarić (city of Krizevci)

In 2018-2019, the city piloted, in collaboration with the Green Energy Cooperative (ZEZ) two crowdfunding campaign for investment in public solar roofs back by roughly 100 citizens. The first campaign was for a solar PV plant on the Technology Park and was backed within 10 days. The second, on the City Library roof, was backed in just 2 days. Public institutions get the electricity and citizens get a return on their investment with a 3.5–4% interest rate over a 10-year period. After that period the PV plants will go into city/public ownership with income distributed for public use.

In 2020, Krizevci has created its own energy cooperative, KLIK. Among other projects, KLIK will connect Krizevci's solar roofs to a micro-network based on blockchain technology. [The Križevci Laboratory of Innovation for Climate \(KLIK\)](#) has been founded in 2020 as the core of the future local energy community. KLIK will contribute to the city's transition to energy independence. The plan is to use this model as the incubator of change, manage more community-energy projects in Križevci, engage citizens in the city energy transition and develop into a true public-private-civic partnership.

Križevci is also active in the fight against energy poverty. In an innovative pilot project in 2016, the administration trained 13 long-term unemployed residents as energy advisors. In this capacity, they visited households struggling with energy poverty and supplied them with equipment that would help them save energy, such as LED bulbs, window seals, extension cords with switches and water pipe and shower-head extensions to reduce the water flow. They also advised the households on easy-to-implement energy-saving behaviours. As a result, each of the 508 households was able to save approximately €70 or 30 kWh annually, leading to a reduction of 16,519 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions per year.

As a rural area, there is a role for farmers as well. Farmers are planning to form an agricultural cooperative that produces pellets from agro-biomass which will be used for heating on their farms, and the surplus sold.

The next opportunity is a 5 MW solar PV plant, for which a community co-sharing ownership model is being developed with the City and national energy utility company HEP. When [HEP launched a public call](#) for local authorities to develop new solar projects, Križevci responded with a proposal for a community energy investment model. An agreement has now been signed between the Municipality and HEP to develop a 5 MW solar power plant, with an expected investment of 4 million EUR. This includes a requirement to involve the local community in financing 20% of the project.



GETTING PREPARED

A shared and collaborative document has been created to collect questions or comments from participants, prior to the session. Participants can access the document from the following link: <https://semestriel.framapad.org/p/path2lc-p2p-gtnk?lang=en>

This document will also be used to share notes taken by participants during the session.



RESOURCES

- Community Energy: a practical guide to reclaiming power (<https://energy-cities.eu/publication/community-energy/>)
- The City Stories podcast (<https://soundcloud.com/energy-cities>)
- How cities can back renewable energy communities (https://energy-cities.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/EnergyCities_RNP_Guidebook_Web.pdf)
- Energy Cities produced a podcast on Krizevci's success story around community energy: <https://soundcloud.com/energy-cities/episode5-communityenergycroatia>
- Case study Krizevci: <https://www.renewables-networking.eu/documents/Case-Study-Krizevci-HR.pdf>

