

# Newsletter

ISSUE 1 - NOVEMBER 2021



**Welcome to the quarterly newsletter from EC²: Energy Citizenship and Energy Communities for a Clean Energy Transition.**

Funded by the EU's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Grants, EC²'s aim is to discover what it takes for energy citizenship and energy communities to thrive.



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# Introduction

**W**elcome to the first edition of the EC<sup>2</sup> newsletter! This project goes beyond the technological aspects of decarbonisation to explore the social conditions that will be required to bring citizens on board. It will gather insights from across disciplines to provide answers on how to facilitate and strengthen energy citizenship: identifying the **legal, economic and psychological barriers**; providing concrete **policy recommendations** to overcome them; and creating resources to support energy citizenship and communities, including an **Energy Citizenship Academy**. You can find detailed information on the project's objectives and deliverables [on our website](#).

To achieve its aims, this project brings together [a diverse group of partners](#): from the world of academia and research, to on-the-ground energy communities, municipalities, policy experts and spanning countries, disciplines, theory and practice. You'll meet some of them in this newsletter, and can find out more on our [website](#) and social media.

● Municipality ● Energy community ● Community network



Work on this three-year collaboration is already well underway: researchers from the Universities of Leipzig, Graz, Wroclaw and Groningen have been holding rich and lively debates over the psychological, economic and legal conceptualisations of energy citizenship, which will be enhanced with co-creation workshops and used to create a measure of energy citizenship. Meanwhile, comparative analyses of legal and economic frameworks of energy communities and energy citizenship are also in progress, which will be the basis for identifying the barriers and facilitators to energy citizenship.

In this issue you can find updates from the current research processes, news about upcoming workshops, and meet our partners. If you think you know someone who'd be interested in hearing from us, why not forward them this newsletter?

We hope you enjoy reading and look forward to staying connected!







# Meet our Partners!

***"We strongly believe that the energy transition has to be designed with the people and for the people."***

That's one of the reasons researchers from the University of Graz decided to develop the EC<sup>2</sup> project proposal, bringing in partners on the way that would match academic and policy expertise with the on-the-ground experience of energy communities - committed groups of citizens dedicated to generating clean energy on their own terms, like Ture Nirvane and Arterra Bizimodu.

## Research & Academia



UNIVERSITÄT  
LEIPZIG



Wrocław University  
of Economics and Business



university of  
 groningen

Find out more about the fourteen partners on our website, where we'll be sharing interviews with partners to understand why they believe that energy communities and citizenship are such an important area of study when it comes to the low-carbon transition. Read our first interviews with members of ICLEI, ZSI and the University of Graz [here](#).

## Municipalities



## Energy Communities

buurkracht.

ecovillaggio  
Torri Superiore



Spółdzielnia Mieszkaniowa  
Wrocław-Południe

## Networks



GEN EUROPE  
GLOBAL  
ECOVILLAGE  
NETWORK





# Defining energy citizenship: an interdisciplinary discourse

Karen Hamann, University of Leipzig

**R**ight after the project's kick-off meeting, researchers from the Universities of Leipzig, Graz, Groningen and Wrocław began holding bi-weekly meetings to start our work of conceptualizing energy citizenship and developing a scale for measuring it. Our aims are to develop a joint interdisciplinary understanding and definition of energy citizenship; to conduct an expert workshop with scientists on a scholarly definition of energy citizenship; to implement co-creation workshops with diverse stakeholders on their perspectives on energy citizenship; and to construct a psychological measurement scale of energy citizenship.

Our bi-weekly meetings were a wonderful example of how interdisciplinary discussions can develop. We had wide-ranging conversations that touched on many topics, for example, the citizen vs. consumer rhetoric, what citizenship means from a legal perspective, if energy citizenship should be conceptualized as something active, which psychological factors are at the core of energy citizenship, and many more. This was also a chance to acquaint ourselves with a workflow suitable for remote collaboration during the Covid-19 pandemic using online whiteboards.

After a few weeks, we decided on a preliminary definition of energy citizenship for our project and took it as a starting point to summarize the state of the field from the legal, economic, and psychological perspectives. In the upcoming months, we will discuss those disciplinary understandings of energy citizenship, determine overlaps and inconsistencies, and work out a definition of energy citizenship suitable for an interdisciplinary discourse. Moreover, our co-creation workshops will take place in December and we're looking forward to receiving reactions to our definition from practice perspectives. Our measurement scale is already in the pretesting phase.

In the meantime, all teams are looking for occasions to meet in person and get into live discussions. Just recently, our psychological team met at the ICEP (International Conference on Environmental psychology) and organized a symposium on the topic of energy citizenship. We heard interesting talks from our project partners about how to motivate people to become energy citizens or members of energy communities, how social identities form and function differently than personal identities, and on the relation of group identities and norms.

## Are you interested in our work?

If you want to get into touch with us to discuss the meaning and definition of energy citizenship, please write to [karen.hamann@uni-leipzig.de](mailto:karen.hamann@uni-leipzig.de). In December, co-creation workshops with diverse participants (members of energy communities, representatives of municipalities and energy companies, interested citizens) will take place in three cities: Leipzig, Wrocław, and Graz. They will evolve around finding a common understanding of energy citizenship. If you are interested in participating, please send an email to [ec2.ZSI@zsi.at](mailto:ec2.ZSI@zsi.at).



# The Legal Aspects of Energy Citizenship and Energy Communities

Annemarie Hofer, University of Graz

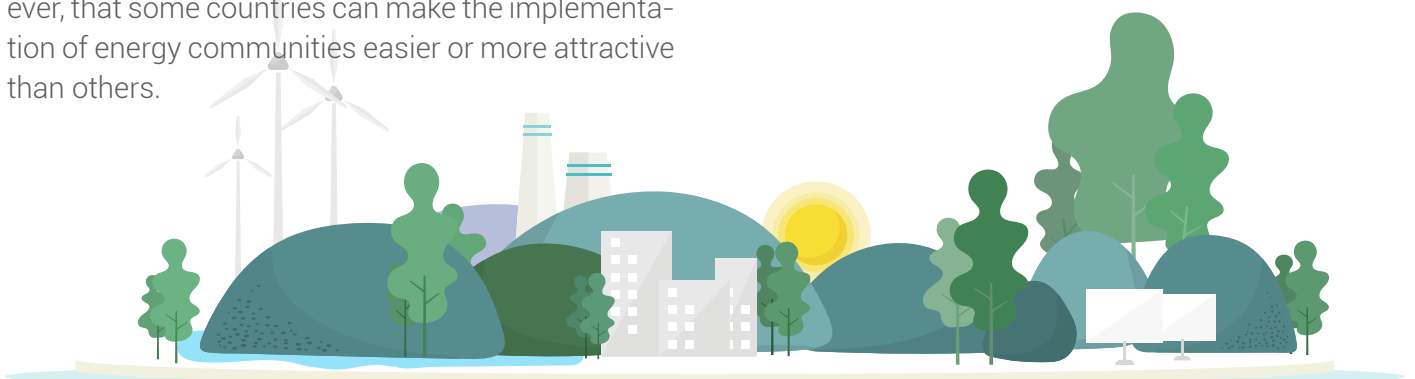
The EC<sup>2</sup> research partners are also putting into focus the law and economics of energy communities and energy citizenship. We want to find facilitators and barriers that influence energy communities and energy citizenship in the EU. The legal team at Uni Graz is mainly focusing on two EU directives: Directive (EU) 2019/944 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 June 2019 on common rules for the internal market for electricity and amending Directive 2012/27/EU, OJ 14.6.2019 L 158/125 which foresees for the so-called "Citizen energy community" and Directive (EU) 2018/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources, OJ 21.12.2018 L 328/82, foreseeing the so-called "Renewable Energy Community". These directives are setting the frame for energy communities and they must be implemented by the member states.

This means that the individual member states have to draft an individual law (or change existing laws) instead of just having a "copy" of the directive. This allows member states to look for the best way to implement energy communities. It also means, however, that some countries can make the implementation of energy communities easier or more attractive than others.

To get an overview of the different means of implementation, we compare the legal situation in six different countries. We do so by collecting country reports that focus on specific questions, for example, if tenants need their landlord's consent if they want to participate in an energy community or if there are benefits foreseen for consumers participating in a renewable energy community or a citizen energy community. These questions have been developed with great input from our visiting scholar Tamara Favaro and the legal team at the University of Graz, where we combine knowledge from civil and public law.

The country reports will allow us to draft a picture of how energy communities could be set up in the sense of the directive in the different member states. Second, it allows us to compare the legal situations of energy communities in the selected member states and to find legal barriers and facilitators.

The findings of the legal analysis will then be joined with the findings of the economic assessment to create a catalogue of economic and legal barriers concerning energy citizenship and energy communities.



# Work on Empirical Studies of Energy Communities Kicks Off

Fleur Goedkoop, University of Groningen

While desk research is under way, the next phase will be empirical studies: providing empirical evidence for the barriers and facilitators of energy communities and energy citizenship. To do this, we will conduct experimental lab studies to identify causal processes influencing the emergence of energy citizenship and energy communities and longitudinal field studies to identify the relation between the social, legal, and economic energy community setup, and the development of energy citizenship of members and nonmembers over time. The longitudinal field study will take place during a time span of 9-12 months starting in April 2022, including energy communities within 4 countries, aiming to reach over 2800 participants.

Currently, we are collecting ideas on which factors and scales to include in this longitudinal field study; defining what we understand under the concept of an energy community, where they can potentially differ in their setups and how this may affect participation over time. Furthermore, we look into the impact or consequences of energy communities such as their potential to foster energy citizenship, their inclusiveness and other intended and, importantly, unintended consequences.

Over the past weeks, we have engaged in making a first draft of key dimensions of energy communities and gained first insights from the legal and economic teams. Furthermore, we organized a symposium on energy citizenship and energy communities, during ICEP (International Conference on Environmental Psychology). Here we also had a first in person meeting with our psychological team, which sparked our energy as well!

For our next step, we will discuss input for the questionnaire to be used in the longitudinal field study within our psychological team on a regular basis to come to a first version. In addition, we aim at listing all potential energy community cases to include for all empirical studies.

## Call for action!

Do you know any energy communities or are you involved in an energy community yourself and are you interested in participating in this study?

Please get in contact with us!

[f.goedkoop@rug.nl](mailto:f.goedkoop@rug.nl).



Photo: Buurkracht

# Wanted: (Future)

## Energy Citizens!

How can and should the energy system of the future look like? How can citizens have more influence on the production and use of energy in their direct environment? What does it take to be a responsible energy citizen?

If you want to help us answer these questions,

### we kindly invite you to our co-creation workshops

that will take place at the University of Graz, Leipzig and Wrocław.

At the workshop you'll have the opportunity to share your ideas about energy citizenship with us and other interested people from various fields; to transform ideas to actionable results and recommendations; to experience an interactive co-creative workshop and to contribute to international research in an EU project for the greater good of society: a clean energy transition.



#### Dates & Contact

##### University of Graz:

3 December 2021, registration via [innovationsrecht@uni-graz.at](mailto:innovationsrecht@uni-graz.at)

##### Leipzig:

December 10<sup>th</sup>, contact [ec2.zsi@zsi.at](mailto:ec2.zsi@zsi.at)

##### Wrocław:

Coming soon!  
Contact [ec2.zsi@zsi.at](mailto:ec2.zsi@zsi.at)







# EC<sup>2</sup> website launches

EC<sup>2</sup> is now online - our recently launched website is home to all the key information about the project, and will be updated with news, publications, project deliverables and other resources. We hope it becomes a valuable repository of information for anyone interested in fostering energy citizenship.

As well as English, the website is also available in all the languages of our practice partners - Dutch, Spanish, Italian and Polish. By having resources available in multiple languages, we hope to engage actors from across the energy sector in all our countries of study. Besides the website, you can also follow EC<sup>2</sup> on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and ResearchGate for all the latest news and opportunities to engage.

## New resource!

[Download our project presentation flyer](#) - a handy two-sider with all the vital project information.

## Stay connected


Whether you're researching energy citizenship, a member of an energy community, working on energy policy, or - we invite you to stay connected with us on social media:

[Website](#) (available in English, Dutch, Spanish, Italian and Polish)

 [facebook.com/EC2.EnergyCitizens](https://facebook.com/EC2.EnergyCitizens)

 [@ec2\\_energy](https://twitter.com/ec2_energy)

 [@ec2\\_energycitizens](https://www.instagram.com/ec2_energycitizens)

 [EC<sup>2</sup> - Clean Energy Transition](#)  
[ResearchGate](#)

