

# Energy Citizenship: A Holistic Vision for Citizen Engagement in the European Energy Transition

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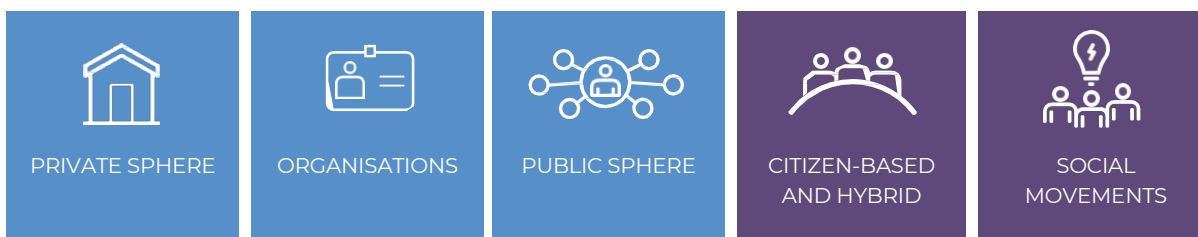
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## An introduction to energy citizenship

The European Union's path towards climate-neutrality presents a unique opportunity to create a more socially just and democratic energy system. The energy price crisis (2021-2022) brought to the surface wider inequalities that characterise the prevailing energy system.<sup>1</sup> As the transition speeds up in response to climate change, energy security and price concerns<sup>2</sup> decision makers must ensure that policy choices do not entrench or aggravate current inequalities. EU responses to the climate crisis, social inequalities, and declining trust in political institutions<sup>3</sup> must go hand in hand to ensure public support for the energy transition. Key aspects in this endeavour are what roles citizens (should and could) play, and how to balance responsibilities and rights of different stakeholders in the energy transition.

EnergyPROSPECTS has examined the potential of *energy citizenship* to contribute to a more sustainable, just, and democratic European energy transition. Energy citizenship pertains to civic involvement and engagement in the energy transition. It can be practised at different levels of action, through different constellations of actors, in the fields of energy production, distribution, and energy consumption, and in the governance of the energy/climate transition.



Today, energy transitions are going at different paces across the Union and citizen involvement and engagement are taking diverse forms<sup>4</sup> that also vary according to the specific contexts of different Member States.<sup>5</sup> EU policymakers are nonetheless becoming increasingly aware that public engagement will determine the success of energy and climate policy.<sup>6</sup> **The clean energy transition is becoming everyone's business. What does this mean for citizens' roles in the European energy transition?**

Building on three years of research, this policy brief presents the scope and diversity of citizen engagement in the energy transition, identifies barriers and opportunities, and proposes targeted recommendations for supporting effective energy citizenship in the European Union.

<sup>1</sup> Eurostat. 2023. [Inability to keep home adequately warm - EU-SILC survey](#). 2013-2022.

<sup>2</sup> Ember. 2023. [European Electricity Review 2023](#).

<sup>3</sup> Eurobarometer. 2023. [Standard Eurobarometer 98 - Winter 2022-2023](#).

<sup>4</sup> See the 596 examples of energy citizenship initiatives in the [EnergyPROSPECTS case database](#).

<sup>5</sup> Hajdinjak, M. *et al.* 2023. [Analytical report on PESTEL factors in the national and local contexts](#). EnergyPROSPECTS Deliverable 5.2, European Commission Grant Agreement No. 101022492.

<sup>6</sup> [Council recommendation on fair transition](#) proposed by EC on Dec 21, adopted in June 2022.

## A holistic approach to citizens' engagement in the energy transition

Within EU energy policy and legislation, citizens are no longer recognised only as consumers on the energy market,<sup>7</sup> but increasingly so as energy prosumers<sup>8</sup> and as members of energy communities<sup>9</sup>. Despite the legal recognition of these active forms of citizen engagement, policymakers appear to have a limited view of citizens' roles within the energy system.<sup>10</sup>

**Energy citizenship offers a holistic approach to citizen engagement in the energy transition.** By mapping a wide diversity of energy citizenship practices across the European continent<sup>11</sup>, we have identified five levels of action: in the private sphere, within organisations, in the public sphere, within citizen-based organisations and/or through collaboration with various actors, and in social movements<sup>12</sup>. Our approach to energy citizenship can help expand policymakers' vision on citizens' roles in energy policy and legislation today. **Recognising the diversity of practices that exist is a first step towards harnessing the potential of energy citizenship in the European energy transition.**

### Examples of actions in the private sphere

- Switching to a green electricity provider.
- Adopting soft or/and clean mobility options.
- Adopting energy saving and efficiency measures, including energy renovation.
- Becoming a prosumer through the installation of solar panels.
- Participating in demand flexibility and/or shifting use to align with time of use tariffs or energy events, for example by using smart metres.
- Aspiring for self-sufficiency through off grid energy sources and storage technologies.
- Energy literacy measures undertaken at the household level.

### Examples of actions within private and public organisations

- Practices mentioned above carried out within the framework of an organisation.
- Contributing to the development of new practices, business models and partnerships that contribute to the energy transition.

<sup>7</sup> Directive on Common Rules for the Internal Market for Electricity 2019/944.

<sup>8</sup> Self-consumption of renewable electricity or *prosumerism* is recognised under the Renewable Energy Directive 2018/2001.

<sup>9</sup> Two types of energy communities are recognised in EU legislation: **renewable energy communities (REC)** under the Renewable Energy Directive 2018/2001 Art.2(16) and **Citizen energy communities (CEC)** are defined under the Internal Electricity Market Directive 2019/944 Art. 2(11).

<sup>10</sup> Pel, B. & Thalberg, K. (2022). EnergyPROSPECTS Synthesis Brief 1. [Setting the scene for a critical exploration of the roles of citizens in the European energy transition](#). European Commission Grant Agreement No. 101022492.

<sup>11</sup> See the 596 examples of energy citizenship initiatives in the [EnergyPROSPECTS case database](#).

<sup>12</sup> List adapted from Debourdeau *et al.* (2022). [Catalogue of energy citizenship cases and typologies](#). EnergyPROSPECTS Deliverable 3.2; and Debourdeau *et al.* (2021). [Conceptual typology](#). EnergyPROSPECTS Deliverable 2.2, European Commission Grant Agreement No. 101022492.

- Initiate energy saving campaigns or clean mobility plans at the workplace, school or university.
- Motivate colleagues for the installation of solar energy on the roof of the organisation.
- Supporting the organisation in acting as an intermediary that supports other initiatives working to accelerate the energy transition.

### Examples of actions in the public sphere

- Participating in consultations where citizens are invited to express their views on the energy transition in general or regarding a specific topic or project.
- Participating in digital participation platforms that enable consultation and proposal-making in the climate and energy sector.
- Voting in referendums and elections at different political levels regarding the energy transition.
- Shaping the political offer and the public debate with regards to the energy transition.

### Examples of collective action in citizen-based organisations and/or through collaboration between NGOs, public authorities, municipalities and/or private actors

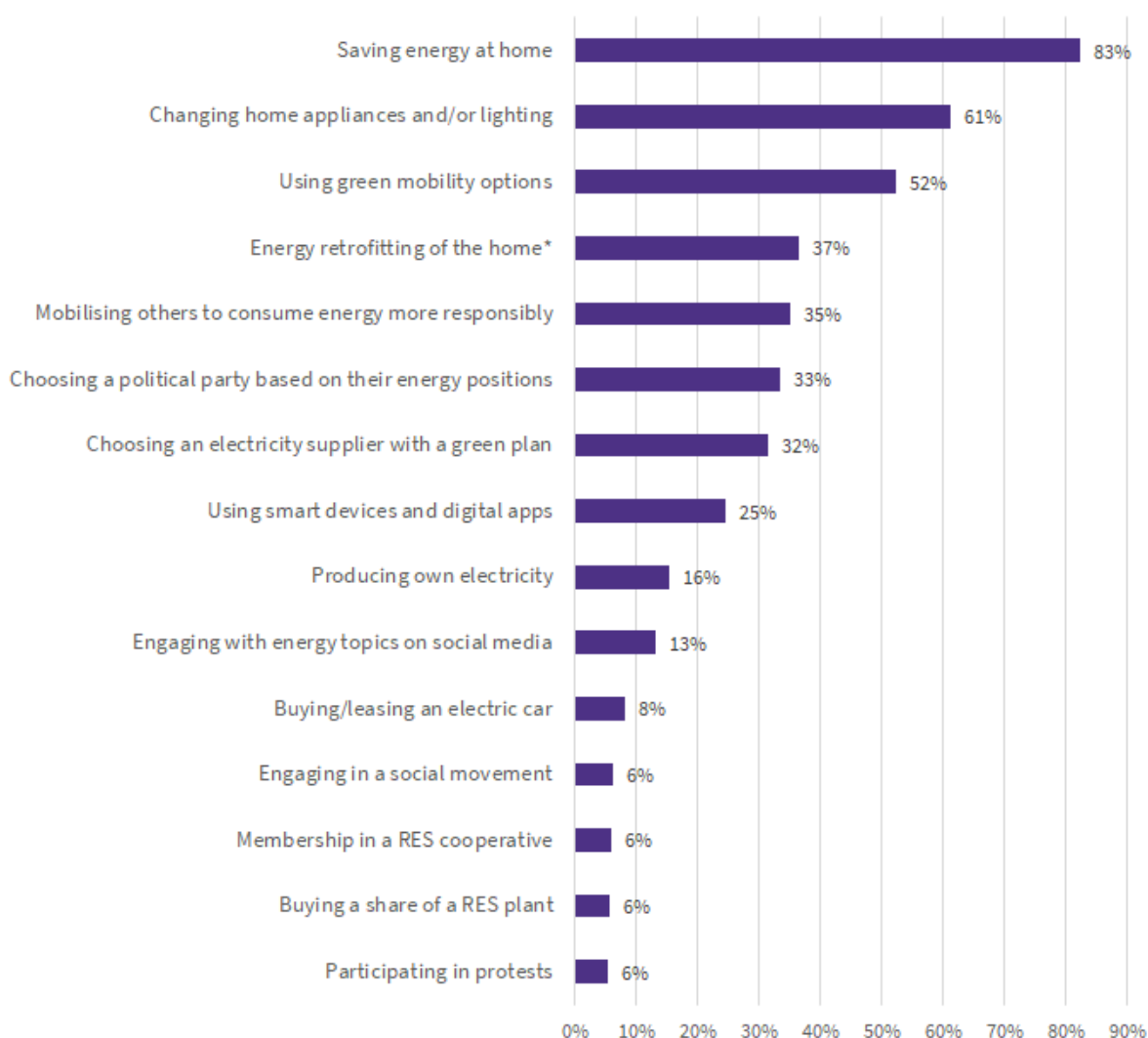
- Engaging in initiatives shaped by NGOs, public authorities, municipalities, and/or private actors, such as involvement in local climate-energy plans, energy saving campaigns, home renovation schemes, or buying shares in renewable energy production (as minority shareholders and/or to foster local acceptance).
- Engaging in initiatives shaped by citizen-based organisations, such as the creation of networks, cooperatives, and communities, sometimes supported by local authorities or other types of intermediary actors. One such example is energy communities.

### Examples of collective action through social movements

- Working to enhance the acceptance and acceptability of the energy transition through promoting debate, campaigning, or launching initiatives.
- Advocating, protesting, or opposing certain policy-orientations or specific projects through manifestations, direct action, public campaigns, protest networks, occupying movements, etc.

## How do citizens engage in the energy transition today and how do they envision doing so in the future?

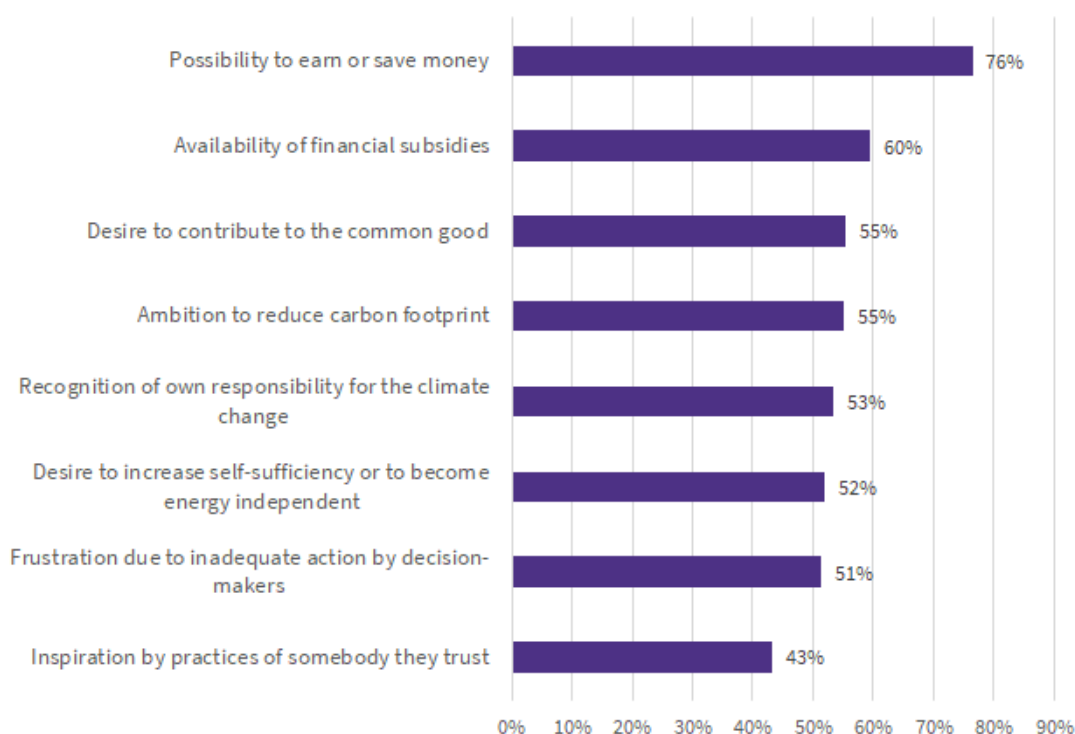
A survey carried out within the project<sup>13</sup> showed that a majority of Europeans perceive their roles in the energy transition as limited to actions taken individually or within the framework of the household. Concurrently, the most widespread means to engage in the energy transition related to the respondents' consumption of energy in their private lives. The graph below shows the ways that the respondents currently engage in the energy transition.



<sup>13</sup> The survey involved over 10 000 participants across the nine countries participating in the project (Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Spain, and The Netherlands). In each country, at least 1,000 citizens completed the questionnaire. An additional 1,000 respondents were recruited from 10 other European countries (Austria, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Turkey, and the United Kingdom). See, Hajdinjak et al. (2024). [Analysis of the online survey](#). EnergyPROSPECTS Deliverable 5.4, European Commission Grant Agreement No. 101022492.

\* Energy retrofitting of the home includes everything from adding adhesive isolation bands to windows and doors to full-scale energy retrofitting.

Three thirds of activities in which respondents are involved have been organised by themselves or together with other members of their households. In one fifth of cases, the activity was something conducted together with the local community in the neighbourhood in which the respondents live. The potential of many of the initiatives mentioned above therefore remain untapped. When asked about the reasons to perform these activities, respondents arranged the eight suggested motivations as shown in the graph below.<sup>14</sup> Financial reasons were ranked as the most important, but not far thereafter were the desire to contribute to the common good or motivations related to climate change.



<sup>14</sup> In parenthesis is % of respondents, for whom this reason was important or very important. Several options were possible.



Looking ahead, the survey participants imagine themselves engaged in the following energy citizenship practices until 2030.

- Looking at practices within the **private sphere**, by far the largest share of respondents (69%) believe that their homes will be equipped with energy efficient home appliances and smart devices that would help them to consume less energy. Over half (56%) are confident that by 2030 they would substantially change their energy consumption practices.
- Regarding practices within **organisations**, many respondents (49%) plan to play an active role in the change of energy consumption practices at the places where they work or study.
- Within the **public sphere**, in the coming years, exactly one half (50%) will probably vote for a political party or candidate that puts the energy transition in the centre of their political programmes, and about one fourth of the respondents are ready to participate in public debates and consultations, or other deliberative processes in the public sphere (28%).
- When it comes to **citizen-based or hybrid organisations**, a similar share of those who are ready to participate in public debates and consultations can imagine joining a citizen-based organisation or other collective form of citizen engagement (27%).
- One fourth of the respondents (25%) signalled a willingness to take part in **social movements**, such as participating in demonstrations and protests linked to various aspects of the energy/climate transition.
- One quarter of the respondents (25%) has **no interest in actively participating in the energy transition** and is quite confident that this will not change in the near future.

This highlights the fact that not all citizens may wish to undertake certain practices or that they may perceive certain of them as out of reach, for a variety of reasons. At the same time, a majority in our survey believes that most people in Europe are not well informed about what they can do to contribute to the energy transition, which underlines the need for European and national policymakers to increase awareness about the available opportunities and potential benefits, as well as recognising that not everyone wants or has the capacities to engage in the same ways. The next section provides a general overview of what factors serve to enable or hinder energy citizenship.

## How can energy citizenship be supported?

The expanded perspective of citizen engagement in the European energy transition needs to be supported with an awareness of the factors that can either facilitate or impede its development. For this purpose, analyses of the political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal contexts for energy citizenship were conducted at the EU-level<sup>15</sup>, as in the nine partner countries of the project: Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, the Netherlands, and Spain<sup>16</sup>. Based on these analyses, this section outlines how different types of energy citizenship can be supported to contribute to a more sustainable, socially fair, and democratic energy transition.

First, achieving climate neutrality by 2050 will require not only a far-reaching transformation of our economies, but also of the lives and everyday activities of European citizens. **Social acceptability of and willingness to invest in energy-efficient technologies and services, good energy awareness and literacy, and public support for the energy transition are crucial for a socially fair and democratic transition.** They cannot be achieved without programmes and measures that promote public engagement and build trust. The lack of trust in public institutions was found to be among the most important barriers for the development of energy citizenship across the nine countries, which poses larger questions of societal trust and democratic governance of the transition.

**To build trust, it is important to recognise the emotional side of energy transition.**<sup>17</sup> Polarisation on energy transition topics could be considerably reduced if policymakers show sensibility towards citizens' fears and anxieties in the face of change. As an example, 57% of respondents in our survey expect that in 2030 they will pay more for energy but only 14% think that the process of energy transition is on the right track<sup>18</sup>. One way to do this could be to complement rather abstract energy and climate objectives with a credible and tangible energy transition vision at the EU-level that speaks to citizens in their everyday lives. What will the energy transition mean in our lives? Ideally, it would go beyond energy and provide a holistic vision of how our societies would change. What will climate neutrality until 2050 look like? How will we move, heat our buildings, produce our energy, etc? What types of new jobs will exist? What will 42.5% of renewable energy in the European energy mix until 2030 mean in our lives? Benefits, challenges, and costs need to be highlighted.

**The relationship between trust, support for the transition and broad and meaningful participation in decision-making was importantly highlighted in the IPCC report on the mitigation of climate**

<sup>15</sup> Debourdeau, A. *et al.* (2022). [PESTEL Analysis of the EU Context](#). EnergyPROSPECTS Deliverable 5.1, European Commission Grant Agreement No. 101022492

<sup>16</sup> Hajdinjak, M. *et al.* (2023). [Analytical report on PESTEL factors in the national and local contexts](#). EnergyPROSPECTS Deliverable 5.2, European Commission Grant Agreement No. 101022492.

<sup>17</sup> Thalberg, K. *et al.* (2023). [Feedback report on knowledge exchange workshops](#). EnergyPROSPECTS Deliverable 6.1, European Commission Grant Agreement No. 101022492.

<sup>18</sup> Hajdinjak *et al.* (2024). [Analysis of the online survey](#). EnergyPROSPECTS Deliverable 5.4, European Commission Grant Agreement No. 101022492.

**change in 2022.**<sup>19</sup> These findings are reiterated in the results from the project's EU-level and national level analyses. Commitment to participatory governance was found to be especially important at the EU level, whereas political and democratic cultures that support active engagement as well as multi-level governance<sup>20</sup> structures that enable citizen involvement were found as important enablers for energy citizenship at the national level.

Second, at the EU level, agreed upon climate and energy policy targets<sup>21</sup> function as an overarching framework for energy citizenship, but **there is a risk of individualisation of responsibilities that can create social backlash if adequate support measures are not in place.**<sup>22</sup> Citizenship, in this context, necessitates **an approach where responsibilities are met with (positive) rights.** The responsibility to change behaviours and practices must be met with a right to access clean and affordable alternatives. Our survey results support this statement, as 56% of respondents reported that they are constrained by insufficient financial resources in undertaking practices that contribute to the energy transition.

At the EU-level, empowerment policies, including the recognition of energy poverty and vulnerable citizens as a political priority, were assessed as crucial for energy citizenship. **Making vulnerable citizens a political priority means acknowledging citizens' differentiated financial capacities and competences** to, for example, upgrade household equipment, change everyday mobility practices or undertake energy retrofitting. Across the nine countries at the national level, we find inequalities in terms of income/wealth disparity and high rates of energy poverty, and high inflation rates and decreasing purchasing power. On the opposite end, among the key enablers, we find financial and technical assistance schemes that promote energy efficiency and RES technologies in buildings and legal measures dedicated to vulnerable consumers, energy poverty and social inclusion.

Third, **financing remains the Achilles heel of the EU's ambitions climate legislation,**<sup>23</sup> especially to ensure that citizens have access to clean and affordable alternatives and for energy citizenship to develop. Among the economic factors in the EU-level analysis, European market intervention together with the design of and access to financing and investments were assessed to be more influential for the development of energy citizenship<sup>24</sup> than for example energy prices and economic growth.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>19</sup> IPCC. (2022): [Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change](#). Contribution of Working Group III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA. Doi: 10.1017/9781009157926

<sup>20</sup> See findings from the [NEC Platform project](#) on how to improve multi-level governance in the design and implementation of the National Climate and Energy Plans required under the Governance Regulation (2018/1999/EU).

<sup>21</sup> See for example the European Climate Law Regulation (2021/1119/EU), the Renewable Energy Directive (2018/2001/EU), and the Energy Efficiency Directive (2012/27/EU).

<sup>22</sup> The Yellow Vest movement in France is an example. See: Defard C. (2022). [The need for a socially-just European Green Deal. Lessons from the Yellow Vests movement](#). Policy paper, Paris: Jacques Delors Institute, 2 June.

<sup>23</sup> Findeisen, F. & MackDo, S. (2023). [Do more with more - How the EU can improve funding for the European Green Deal](#). Policy brief, Hertie School, Jacques Delors Centre, 23 May.

<sup>24</sup> EU-financing has been found to be a key source of funding for energy citizenship initiatives, see: Thalberg, K. et al. (2023). [Synthesis brief 4: Taking stock of energy citizenship in Europe](#). European Commission Grant Agreement No. 101022492.

<sup>25</sup> Energy prices and economic growth fluctuates. In the current context of high inflation and weakened purchasing power, citizens prioritise these issues ahead of the European Parliament elections in June 2024. Market intervention and support mechanisms are therefore all the more important to increase legitimacy for the European energy transition and transition policies. See: IPSOS. (2023). [55% of Europeans fear that the energy transition will further fragment society](#).

Furthermore, socio-economic as well as governance aspects need to be considered when designing financial support for the transition,<sup>26</sup> especially if policymakers desire to promote energy citizenship and a socially inclusive and democratic transition. Therefore, the political, social, and economic factors need to be considered together.

**Financing and investment opportunities that contribute to a more sustainable energy system were considered as key enablers** across all countries, which echoes the findings at the EU-level.<sup>27</sup> Public funding is needed in the development of electricity transmission and storage, which, if insufficiently developed, represent a crucial barrier for energy citizenship at the national level. Equally important is the public funding for the energy retrofitting of the existing building stock, which is a key measure to combat energy poverty and decarbonise the residential sector overall.

Fourth, **political integration at the EU-level and well-functioning multi-level governance are key levers to even out unequal capacities for the development of energy citizenship across the European Union.**<sup>28</sup> The transition is proceeding at different paces across the Union and energy citizenship is developing in diverging ways in different Member States. However, the challenges of socio-economic inequalities, in terms of access to clean and affordable alternatives, as well as trust and support for the transition, albeit to different extents, exist everywhere. Here, the EU can play a key role to support a socially inclusive and democratic transition through its legislation and financing mechanisms.

**One example where the EU could play an important role would be in supporting and simplifying administrative procedures to set up citizen-owned renewable energy production.** This has been identified as a key barrier for the development of collective energy citizenship practices across all the countries studied. While EU-initiatives like the Energy Communities Repository are great steps to provide clear information, access to technical assistance and one-stop shops, there is room for improvement.<sup>29</sup> Another example is the support to and empowerment of local authorities and regions that need increased human resources, competences, and financial capacities to carry out the energy transition.<sup>30</sup>

Lastly, **the different roles that citizens can play in the energy transition, especially collective forms of engagement, need to be better recognised.** Awareness-raising and information on different kinds of engagement provides concrete examples of what the energy transition could mean in citizens' everyday lives. The EnergyPROSPECTS survey has shown that most citizens consider the information provided through EU websites and social media channels to be among the most credible sources of

<sup>26</sup> For an example of how inclusive governance can be promoted through EU funding schemes, see: Defard C. & Thalberg K. (2022). [An inclusive Social Climate Fund for the just transition](#). Policy brief, Jacques Delors Institute, January.

<sup>27</sup> Financial support and assistance was also found to be the most efficient and less burdensome measures in a [2023 survey](#) carried out by IPSOS and BNP Paribas, see page 23.

<sup>28</sup> In the [Standard Eurobarometer 99 - Spring 2023](#), 73% of respondents were for a common energy policy among EU Member States.

<sup>29</sup> See policy recommendations in: Kerneis K. (2023). [The EU framework on energy communities](#). Sun4all Project, European Commission, October.

<sup>30</sup> See for example: Colin, A. *et al.* (2022). [Local authorities: the need for investment and human resources for climate neutrality](#). Climate report, Institute for Climate Economics, 22 October; Ancelle, A. *et al.* (2022). [Human capacity in local governments: the bottleneck of the building stock transition](#). Report, Energy Cities, April.

information, but at the same time these resources are used only by a minority of citizens. The EU institutions should do more to utilise these information resources and increase their popularity among the citizens.

Based on the barriers and enablers outlined in this section, the next part of the policy brief proposes recommendations towards a common framework for a sustainable, just, and democratic Energy transition.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> For more recommendations, see: Hajdinjak, M. *et al.* (2024). [Prospective energy citizenship scenarios with recommendations](#). EnergyPROSPECTS Deliverable 5.5, European Commission Grant Agreement No. 101022492; and Thalberg, K. *et al.* (2024). [Working paper with recommendations. Energy citizenship – what roles for citizens in the European energy transition?](#) EnergyPROSPECTS Deliverable 6.3, European Commission Grant Agreement No. 101022492; and Thalberg, K. *et al.* (2024).



# Towards a common framework for a sustainable, just, and democratic European energy transition

**The energy transition needs to bring everyone along.** This can only be guaranteed by recognising that citizens, communities, municipalities, regions and even Member States, have different capacities to participate, which means that although the goal is common, roles and responsibilities must be differentiated. Decision-makers need to ensure that everyone can participate in the energy transition by providing conditions that will **enable everyone to undertake the necessary changes in an easy, accessible, and affordable way**, taking particular care of the most vulnerable. At the same time, it needs to be **simpler for those who want to go further**, so that they can more easily scale their activities and have a bigger impact<sup>32</sup>.

## Recommendations

**Recommendation 1. Increased policy integration at the EU-level.** There is a need for better coordination between different directorates of the European Commission to ensure that various social and environmental aspects of the energy transition are considered together, for example between DG Clima, DG Ener, DG Regio, DG Empl, DG Env and DG Budg.

**Recommendation 2: Improve the targeting and increase the financial support for vulnerable households by raising the financing envelope for the Social Climate Fund**, for example through the earmarking of more revenues from the European carbon markets.<sup>33</sup>

**Recommendation 3. Support Member States to carry out granular surveys on the social determinants of support for and resistance against energy and climate policy measures.** The French IPSOS/RTE poll can be seen as a good practice to provide robust evidence for targeted policy measures that integrate socio-economic considerations into energy policymaking. Such polls should include perceptions of benefits and challenges of the energy transition.

<sup>32</sup> For concrete examples, see: Thalberg, K. *et al.* (2024). [Empowering collective energy citizenship for a sustainable and democratic European energy transition](#). EnergyPROSPECTS Policy brief 1. European Commission Grant Agreement No. 101022492; and Thalberg, K. and Debourdeau, A. (2024). [Enhancing energy citizenship through business and social innovation models](#). EnergyPROSPECTS Policy brief. European Commission Grant Agreement No. 101022492.

<sup>33</sup> See, Defard, C. (2022). [The need for a socially-just European Green Deal](#). Policy paper. Jacques Delors Institute.



**Recommendation 4. Different types of citizen engagement and involvement in the energy transition needs to be better recognised and communicated.** Awareness-raising and information on different kinds of engagement provides concrete examples of what the energy transition could mean in citizens' everyday lives. The EnergyPROSPECTS survey has shown that most citizens consider the information provided through EU websites and social media channels to be among the most credible sources of information, but at the same time these resources are used only by a minority of citizens. The EU institutions should do more to utilise these information resources and increase their popularity among the citizens. To be effective, information needs to be presented in an accessible language, in an engaging way, should be easy to digest and comprehend (non-technical language), and not overloaded with details.

**Recommendation 6. Institutionalise an EU Citizen Assembly on Climate.**<sup>34</sup> The integration of citizen assemblies within the regular legislative procedure would increase the legitimacy and social acceptability of policymaking. To this end, adequate administrative capacity can be ensured by setting up a monitoring committee that oversees implementation and follow-up of recommendations. Concentrate on specific proposals, targeted topics, and a process designed to answer a specific question. Explore how EU climate pact ambassadors could be integrated into the process to ensure a connection to the wider public.

**Recommendation 6. Support a more interactive governance through permanent Energy and Climate Stakeholder's Dialogues at all levels**<sup>35</sup> to create spaces where citizen organisations, public authorities, civil society organisations, industries, startups, SMEs, investors, and other relevant stakeholders can discuss energy and climate policies and review the implementation progress of the EU Green Deal. Citizen involvement and engagement should be considered throughout such processes.

Such platforms could support policy efforts to reduce bureaucracy and facilitate green investments, among others. The European Commission could investigate options to deliver financial and technical support for the early stages of the establishment of such Energy and Climate Stakeholders Dialogue platforms, for example through a dedicated facility.

**Recommendation 7. Make the partnership principle guiding for all climate and energy related plans,** such as the Social Climate Plans and National Energy and Climate Plans.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> See, Defard, C. (2022). [The need for a socially-just European Green Deal](#). Policy paper, Jacques Delors Institute.

<sup>35</sup> See, Defard, C. (2023). [Energy Union 2.0. to deliver the European Green Deal](#). Report, Paris: Jacques Delors Institute, November.

<sup>36</sup> See, Defard, C. and Thalberg, K. (2022). [An inclusive Social Climate Fund for the just transition](#). Policy brief, Jacques Delors Institute, January.



**Recommendation 8. The creation of a European Facility for Citizen Involvement in Local Innovative Initiatives.** This facility could serve to complement the Energy Communities Repository by supporting initiatives beyond energy communities, for example led by public actors, NGOs, citizen-based organisations, or businesses, and provide funding calls, tools, recommendations, and best practices on how to involve citizens in local initiatives and enhance energy citizenship values in such endeavours.

**Recommendation 9. Earmark EU-funding and technical assistance for citizen-based organisations and initiatives,** for example in initiatives like the Green Assist project and the Energy Poverty Advisory Hub.

**Recommendation 10. Include research on how energy citizenship values could be enhanced within the next Horizon Europe Strategic Plan (2025-2029) or within the LIFE Clean Energy Transition sub-programme.** This research should particularly aim to explore how energy citizenship values, such as citizen participation and control, democratic governance, and social inclusion, justice and equity could be further enabled by decision-makers through innovative energy transition initiatives<sup>37</sup>.

**Recommendation 11. Include support for outreach and inclusion in existing technical assistance offers for citizen-based energy transition initiatives from relevant EU initiatives** such as the Energy Communities Repository, Rural Energy Community Advisory Hub and the Energy Poverty Advisory Hub. This could include the development of a database on best-practices on benefit-sharing and improving energy literacy beyond the initiative and on the inclusion of hard-to-reach citizens.

<sup>37</sup> See, Thalberg, K. and Debourdeau, A. (2024). [Enhancing energy citizenship through business and social innovation models](#). EnergyPROSPECTS Policy brief. European Commission Grant Agreement No. 101022492.