

Welcome to the first issue of the DIALOGUES Newsletter!

Energy citizenship for a sustainable future – DIALOGUES project

To reach the ambitious challenges of the European Union's Green Deal and the Paris Agreement - to make Europe the first carbon neutral continent by 2050 - while also driving innovation and job growth, **swift action is needed**, and it should involve a broad range of actors. Since the 2009 commitment to creating an internal Energy Union, the EU and its member states have made significant progress with the digitalization of the energy sector, the advancement of energy innovation and technologies, energy efficiency uptake, and the continuous shift towards renewable energy sources. **The Clean Energy for all Europeans Package (CEP) acknowledges the important role of citizens' active participation in this ongoing transition, and the perspective of a just and inclusive transition, spreading its costs and benefits equitably.** The IPCC Global Warming of 1.5 °C report also emphasizes the need for citizen engagement and transformative change at a societal level.

Within this wider challenge of energy transition and climate neutrality, DIALOGUES sees energy citizenship research as an opportunity to link the Energy Union's strategic objectives and the various contributions of citizens under one conceptual framework, focussing on broad trends in citizen engagement with energy topics, awareness of GHG impacts of their choices, equity, and justice.

DIALOGUES will operationalise, contextualize, measure, and support the framework environments, policies and institutions that allow deep, inclusive energy citizenship to emerge. Thereby, DIALOGUES aims at the elaboration of the knowledge needed to harness the concept of energy citizenship for targeted policymaking, **to strengthen the role and efficacy of energy citizenship as a contributor to the strategic priorities of the sustainable energy transition.** Rather than focusing on specific behavioural changes or new technologies, our project recognizes that transformative energy system changes must become embedded in people's daily decisions. Citizens evaluate trade-offs between competing goals and co-benefits, and thus it is important that organic citizen-driven innovation, investment, lifestyle changes, and collective action are able to manifest in many different ways within the household/community, municipal/regional, and national/supra-national contexts.

→ DIALOGUES central methodological pillar is grounded in tested inter- and transdisciplinary techniques, with a spotlight on open innovation and co-design of the research process through novel Citizen Action Labs in 8 countries.

→ For the policy and research communities, DIALOGUES will move the idea of energy citizenship forward to an operational concept that offers actionable policy insights, applied research tools and a unifying theory for citizen-oriented energy research.

→ The project will develop tools to measure the degree, and map the modes of expressing energy citizenship, related KPIs, a policy decision tool, and a Knowledge Platform linking all project data and results.

→ The policy makers & stakeholders from the DIALOGUES levels of analysis (community, local/ regional, and national/supranational) will be included through co-creative workshops and policy briefs.

Author: **Dr. Andrea Kollmann** ([Energieinstitut at the Johannes Kepler University Linz](#))

Our News

Simple in wording, complex in meaning: energy citizenship

The existential threat of climate change requires the shift between energy systems, from fossil to renewables, or from high to low energy usage and active participation of citizens in the energy transition. **The active role of citizens in the energy transition is related to the concept of energy citizenship.** The concept is central in providing a framework for the actors involved in the profound, systematic transformation of the energy sector. It indicates citizens' active and responsible participation through individual and collective actions in developing technologies, solutions, facilities, entrepreneurial ventures, and projects aimed at expanding energy access.

Author: **Mehmet Efe Biresselioglu** ([Izmir University of Economics – IUE](#))

[read more](#)

Men's Club – Exclusivity of Renewable Energy Cooperatives

When looking at renewable energy cooperatives (REC) we see a strong difference between men and women participating, although studies find that stronger female participation would bear many advantages. Women invest less in RECs, are underrepresented in (board) membership and active participation. People participating in European RECs are a very homogenous group: male, retired, high income, high electricity consumption and high educational level. Reasons for the low participation of women in RECs is associated with:

- 1) underrepresentation of women in the energy sector
- 2) women's risk-aversion
- 3) foundation of RECs and new recruitment
- 4) REC's lack of knowledge or willingness to include women
- 5) women's time constraints
- 6) gender wealth gap, and
- 7) formal structures of RECs.

Unfortunately, no data is available on the role and participation of gender diverse people, which reflects problems of gender data gaps and strongly calls for further research.

Authors: **Farina Hoffmann, Sarah Louis Montgomery, Gotelind Alber** ([GENDERCC](#))

[read more](#)

What motivates or hinders becoming an energy citizen?

Energy citizenship has recently gained prominence and broader usage. **The concept refers to citizens' active and responsible participation through individual and collective actions to enlarge energy access and achieve the energy transition.** The individual, collective and institutional levels of energy citizenship emphasise specific motivators and barriers.

The **motivators** for energy citizenship include:

- individuals' concern and attention to climate change and environmental aspects,
- willingness to take climate actions and support climate policies,
- intention to invest in community-owned renewable energy, and
- close interaction and mutual trust between the local governments and the representatives of the local communities.

On the other hand, **barriers** are related with the regulatory, financial, and infrastructural aspects, as well as socio-political facets like:

- the lack of willingness to participate due to political disobedience and social hesitation,
- lack of awareness and access to information,
- public values and concerns,
- lack of knowledge about energy topics, and citizens' perception that their involvement will make no difference.

Author: **Mehmet Efe Biresselioglu** ([IUE](#)), **Muhittin Hakan Demir** ([IUE](#)), **Berfu Solak** ([IUE](#)), et al. (2021) Comprehensive, interdisciplinary report on energy citizenship.

[read more](#)

Entering into an open dialogue on energy citizenship with citizens and local governments

DIALOGUES' nine citizen action labs (Norway, Greece, Switzerland, Turkey, Canada, Bulgaria, Germany, and Italy) will **explore paths towards the emergence and deepening of energy citizenship, in a co-creation process between the implementation partners and the participants.** Citizenship has to do with belonging, and so does energy citizenship. It rests on the feeling of being part of something.

To this day, participating in the energy transition may not have created a feeling of belonging for a vast majority of people living in these countries.

How to engage people in this process is our central aim.

Author: **Karl-Ludwig Schibel**, [Climate Alliance Italy](#), **Marlyne Sahakian**, [University of Geneva](#)

[read more](#)

Are you interested in following DIALOGUES' work towards strengthening the role of citizens in the energy transition?

Then, subscribe to our mailing list and be up-to-date with the latest news, events and achievements

[subscribe now](#)

upcoming events

DIALOGUES at the ECEEE 2022 – Summer Study on energy efficiency

6-11 June 2022 | Hyères, France

[discover more](#)

in case you've missed it

DIALOGUES at the Berlin Energy Days with the event: How to boost energy citizenship! [discover more](#)

06 May 2022 | Online/ Berlin

DIALOGUES at the Annual Conference of the British Sociology Association: Building Equality and Justice Now [discover more](#)

26 April 2022 | Online

DIALOGUES at the 2nd International Conference of International Researchers of the Education for Environmental Citizenship 2022 [discover more](#)

11 March 2022 | Online/ Prague

DIALOGUES at the Conference "Energy poverty and municipal actions" [discover more](#)

15 February 2022 | Online

DIALOGUES at the Symposium: "Social innovation: next steps in the energy transition" [discover more](#)

18 November 2021 | Online/ Delft

DIALOGUES at the SIET Conference on Social Innovation in the Energy Transition [discover more](#)

18 November 2021 | Online

DIALOGUES in the lecture series on "Climate – Change – Thinking" [discover more](#)

01 November 2021 | Online/ DE