



POWER TO THE PEOPLE





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International Day of Co-operatives on July 6 highlighted the crucial role co-operatives can play in overcoming the economic crisis and speeding-up the transition to clean energy. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has stressed, "co-operatives are a reminder to the international community that it is possible to pursue both economic viability and social responsibility".

Current policies do not measure up to the scale of the challenge of the climate crisis. To prevent devastating climate change we urgently need to transform our energy system. The transition has begun, but it will be faster, stronger and more widespread if citizens are at its heart. This can be in the form of a community putting solar panels on the roof of the local school, a small wind park on a hill near the village, or insulation purchased collectively for the entire apartment building.

Europe needs to increase the amount of renewable energy from community energy schemes, such as renewable energy co-operatives, where citizens own or participate in energy production and/or distribution.

EUROPE NEEDS:

- Binding targets for renewable energy produced by community-owned projects. (Similar targets are already in place in Scotland and Belgium.)
- National renewable energy agencies with grant and loan making abilities, as well as for advice.
- An end to fossil fuel subsidies in Europe – these should instead go towards the transition to renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- The extension and protection of stable support schemes for renewable energy projects.
- Local smart grid development adapted to renewable energy sources.
- A proportion of shares in large scale energy projects to be for the local community.
- A fair banking-loan system with special guarantees for community-owned projects.
- Citizens as producers, suppliers and consumers of clean energy.

THE BENEFITS:

- Citizens and communities are involved in and make decisions about their energy future.
- Wide public support for renewable energy across Europe.
- Stronger, healthier communities with a sense of purpose, pride and achievement.
- A valuable new source for much-needed investment in renewables, energy transmission and storage, and energy savings.
- Promotion of the efficient use of energy.
- Fair and transparent energy bills for citizens.
- A reduction in carbon emissions and contribution to tackling climate change.
- The creation of green jobs contributing to more sustainable economies.
- The benefits of investments are kept in the local economy.

Contact: molly.walsh@foeurope.org or m.behar@coopseurope.coop



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