



Empowering Renewable and Citizen Energy Communities

Newsletter #5

March 2026

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CONTENTS:

Dear Reader,

welcome to the newest edition of the POWER-E-COM Newsletter.

Over the past months, our partners across Europe have continued to advance the development of Energy Communities and strengthen cooperation between municipalities, energy agencies, and citizens. As the project enters its final year, the focus is on consolidating results and ensuring lasting impact beyond 2026.

A key milestone was the international workshop “Energy Communities: a driving force for the energy transition”, held on 25 February 2026 in Wels, Austria, as part of the European Energy Efficiency Conference. The event placed Energy Communities at the centre of the European discussion on energy independence and citizen engagement.

By bringing together policymakers, experts, and community leaders, POWER-E-COM continues to show that the energy transition is not only technological, but societal — with citizens at its core.

We invite you to explore the latest updates in this edition and follow our continued work toward a more resilient and community-driven European energy system.

- Energy Communities in the European Spotlight
- Pilot in Focus: Gabrovo, Bulgaria
- Project Events & News Across Europe
- Upcoming Events
- Contacts

POWER-E-COM aims

POWER-E-COM aims to foster the development of the Energy Communities by providing support and guidance to municipalities, existing Energy Communities, and engaged citizens.

DURATION:

01/10/2023 – 30/9/2026

Read more on
POWER-E-COM:

<http://power-e-com.eu/>



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Energy Communities in the Spotlight at European Energy Efficiency Conference 2026

Energy Communities were at the centre of discussions at the European Energy Efficiency Conference 2026 in Wels, Austria, organised within the framework of the World Sustainable Energy Days. The international workshop “Energy Communities: a driving force for the energy transition”, hosted by the LIFE project POWER-E-COM, gathered 169 participants and contributed to a conference attended by more than 600 experts from over 50 countries. Representatives from the European Commission, CINEA, energy agencies, regulatory authorities, financial organisations and community energy networks discussed how Energy Communities can strengthen Europe’s energy independence while increasing citizen participation in the energy transition.

The first session of the workshop, titled “**Communities: a driving force for the energy transition**”, offered insights into enabling policy frameworks, support programmes, innovative financing models, cooperation with distribution system operators (DSOs), and the use of digital tools supporting Energy Communities.

The second session, “**Beyond Theory: Success stories from Energy Communities across Europe**”, presented successful real-world examples from different countries and showcased how energy sharing and other community-based approaches are implemented on the ground. Speakers highlighted key success factors, common challenges and practical lessons that can support the replication and scaling of community energy initiatives across Europe.

The workshop was organised within the ManagEnergy Initiative and the LIFE project POWER-E-COM, in cooperation with FEDARENE, contributing to the objectives of the European Green Deal and REPowerEU by placing citizens at the centre of Europe’s clean energy transition.



Pilot in Focus: From Vision to Action: Energy Communities in Gabrovo, Bulgaria

What does the energy transition look like when it starts from the ground up?

In Gabrovo, Bulgaria, citizens, municipal leaders, and local organisations are working together to turn the concept of Energy Communities into a practical local solution. Their journey is featured in a new pilot video produced within the POWER-E-COM project.

The short video offers a closer look at how local initiative and collaboration can unlock new opportunities for renewable energy. It highlights the people and partnerships behind the effort — from municipal support to active citizens committed to building a more sustainable energy future.

Gabrovo's experience demonstrates that the energy transition does not happen only through policies and technologies. It also grows through local engagement, shared knowledge, and communities willing to work together to shape their own energy systems.

Watch [the video](#) and discover how local action is driving the energy transition in Gabrovo.



Events & News Across Europe

Project Partners Align Strategies for the Final Project Phase

In October 2025, POWER-E-COM partners met in Thurles, Ireland, for a consortium meeting hosted by Tipperary Energy Agency. Representatives from Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Ireland, Slovenia and Spain reviewed progress across pilot regions and coordinated activities for the project's final phase.

Key discussions focused on scaling up successful support models for Energy Communities, addressing regulatory and administrative barriers, strengthening municipal engagement and ensuring sustainability beyond the project's completion in September 2026. The meeting reinforced the importance of cross-border cooperation in accelerating the energy transition across Europe.



POWER-E-COM Presented at Connected Innovations Event in Ireland

Irish project partners from the TUS Sustainable Development Research Institute (SDRI) recently showcased POWER-E-COM at the Connected Innovations event. Representatives from Tipperary Energy Agency and Sales Community Power contributed to a panel discussion and presented the project at an information stand, highlighting the role of Community Energy initiatives in the energy transition.

The discussion demonstrated how the project's combined top-down and bottom-up approach helps engage local stakeholders and supports the development of Energy Communities in Ireland.



POWER-E-COM at ENLIT Europe 2025

In November 2025, the POWER-E-COM project was presented at ENLIT Europe in Bilbao, one of Europe's leading events in the energy sector. Project partner Escan Consultoría Energética participated in the Energy Democracy Hub, where Francisco Puente shared insights from the POWER-E-COM project during the session *"Why Democratising Energy is Vital for Our Future Energy System."*

The presentation highlighted the importance of Energy Communities in enabling citizens and local actors to participate in renewable energy production, while also supporting local development and climate action. The session gathered around 50 participants and sparked an engaging discussion on how to advance a more democratic and sustainable energy system in Europe.



Gabrovo Energy Community Receives European Recognition

The Bulgarian pilot region of Gabrovo continues to strengthen the development of Energy Communities through several recent activities within the POWER-E-COM project. A national stakeholder roundtable brought together policymakers, municipal representatives and energy experts to discuss key challenges such as grid access, administrative procedures and financing mechanisms for community energy initiatives.

At the local level, members of two Energy Communities in Gabrovo met to exchange experiences, review progress and discuss ways to improve the long-term sustainability of their initiatives.

Gabrovo also shared its experience at national level through the Energy Community Transformation Office (ECTO) approach, highlighting how municipalities can support citizen participation and the development of Energy Communities.

A major milestone was recently achieved as **the Energy Community Gabrovo RDNO was selected for funding under the European Energy Communities Facility**. Out of 690 applications across Europe, only 79 initiatives were selected — with Gabrovo being the only approved project from Bulgaria. This recognition confirms the strong potential of the local model and its contribution to the energy transition.



Webinar Highlights Renewable Heating and Community-Based Solutions in Germany

On 12 November 2025, Ingo Ball (WIP Renewable Energies) and Benedikt Beinhofer (EWO Bürgerstiftung Energiewende Oberland) participated in the online event “Heating and Cooling with Renewables in Germany – Developments and Expectations for a Rapid Heat Transition.” The webinar was jointly organised by POWER-E-COM and the European Technology and Innovation Platform on Renewable Heating and Cooling (RHC-ETIP). The event aimed to present national developments in renewable heating solutions and explore opportunities to replicate approaches for thermal Energy Communities across Europe.



Upcoming Events

Preparing the Ground for Future Energy Communities in Slovenia

Between November 2025 and February 2026, Slovenian partners intensified advisory activities with municipalities and regional stakeholders interested in developing Energy Communities.

Several municipalities are now exploring Energy Community concepts linked to public buildings and rooftop solar installations, with further developments expected in 2026.

To further support municipalities, an additional **workshop will be organised on 20 March 2026** to discuss practical steps for developing Energy Communities.



Webinar: Financing Energy Communities

Access to financing remains one of the key challenges for Energy Communities. To address this, POWER-E-COM, together with FEDARENE, is organising a webinar on practical financing solutions for Renewable Energy Communities.

14 April 2026 | 11:30–13:00 CET | Online

Join us and register here: <https://buff.ly/igqWmlP>

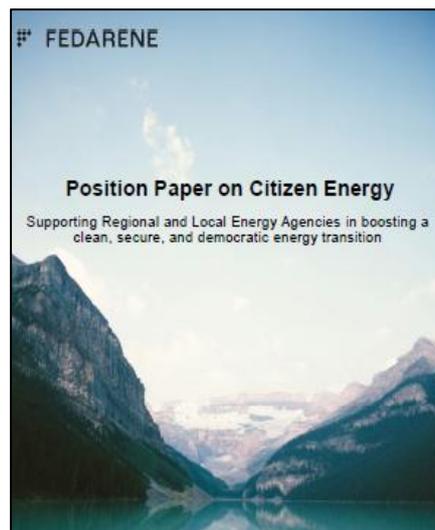
Participants will gain insights into financing opportunities, practical examples from pilot regions and the EU policy context supporting community energy development. The event will bring together EU representatives, energy agencies and community energy experts to discuss how to unlock investment and support citizen-led renewable energy projects across Europe.



Further Reading: New FEDARENE Position Paper on Citizen Energy

Interested in the policy framework supporting Energy Communities? FEDARENE has recently published its [Position Paper on Citizen Energy](#), presenting recommendations to strengthen citizen-led energy initiatives across Europe.

The publication highlights the importance of regional and local energy agencies in supporting Energy Communities and calls for improved policy implementation, better grid and data access, stronger One-Stop Shops and easier financing for community projects.



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