

**Capacity building
report**

Deliverable D5.2

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Executive summary

The present report, Capacity Building Report, details the methodology and capacity building events developed and deployed throughout the Life COMET project in order to replicate good practices for building national coalitions of energy communities in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Based on a preliminary stakeholder mapping exercise and a capacity building needs assessment, the capacity building activities entailed the organisation of online and in-person events. The project sought to adapt successful coalition-building strategies to diverse national contexts, aiming to empower local actors and establish networks of actors capable of driving citizen-led energy transitions.

By pairing replication countries with experienced consortium partners from Estonia (Tal Tech), Greece (Electra Energy Cooperative), and Poland (Coop Tech Hub), the project ensured that activities were also tailored specifically to the context and needs of local partners, facilitating essential peer-to-peer learning and regional cooperation across borders.

Implementation varied significantly by country to address specific local priorities. In Bulgaria, efforts focused on supporting municipalities and building trust through workshops in Plovdiv and Sofia. The Czech Republic activities were developed in close partnership with the existing national coalition (UKEN) to leverage existing events, emphasizing practical, community-level examples from Poland. Meanwhile, Latvia and Lithuania benefited from a joint, cross-Baltic approach that prioritized knowledge sharing and peer-to-peer exchanges to navigate shared challenges, such as grid access, bureaucratic hurdles, and the limitations of current prosumer-focused models.

Across the project, eight capacity-building events were successfully delivered, engaging 196 participants from diverse backgrounds, including local authorities, energy experts, and citizen initiatives. These gatherings went beyond mere information transfer; they served as catalysts for ecosystem building, revealing interest and fostering connections where, in some cases, none existed previously. The results confirm that while legislative frameworks are slowly improving, practical implementation often remains stalled by administrative complexity and a lack of dedicated financing mechanisms for energy communities.

A key takeaway is that replicating community energy projects and an enabling ecosystem for their development requires a tailored process of empowerment rather than a uniform duplication of models. Success depends on cultivating trust and networking, as well as adapted legal frameworks. As the replication activities of the project conclude, the primary challenge remains sustaining momentum beyond individual events, a key role that can be shouldered by national coalitions of energy communities. Reinforcing the critical role of national coalitions in providing ongoing policy analysis and capacity building to local initiatives is therefore crucial to ensure tailored and efficient support to energy communities.

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1 - Replication activities in the Life COMET project

1.1 Replication activities in the Life COMET project

The Life COMET project aims to transform the community energy landscape in Central and Eastern Europe through assessment, experience sharing, and coalition building. In its initial phase, the project carried out a comprehensive stakeholder mapping across seven target countries (Croatia, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia). This mapping effort, documented in [Deliverable D2.1](#), identified actors, supporters, and enablers in the field of community energy and assessed their roles, interests, and potential synergies. The exercise provided a critical evidence base for the creation of **national community energy coalitions**, conceived as collective initiatives able to advocate for policy reforms, stimulate innovation, and accelerate the uptake of energy communities. By adopting this structured and participatory approach, Life COMET demonstrated the value of building networks that join key stakeholders on the national level. Such national coalitions were created in the seven target countries, and each established a short-, mid-, and long-term roadmap to map out next steps and future developments to support the development of community energy projects. These roadmaps were documented in [Deliverable D2.3](#). In parallel, a toolkit for establishing community energy service points was developed, as [Deliverable 4.1](#), so as to equip such stakeholders (national coalitions but also supporters and enablers) with tailored tools to support energy communities.

These activities were the foundation for the replication activities presented in the current deliverable (D5.2). The overall **objective of the replication activities in the Life COMET project** is to extend the methodology for building national community energy coalitions to a new set of countries: **Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia**.

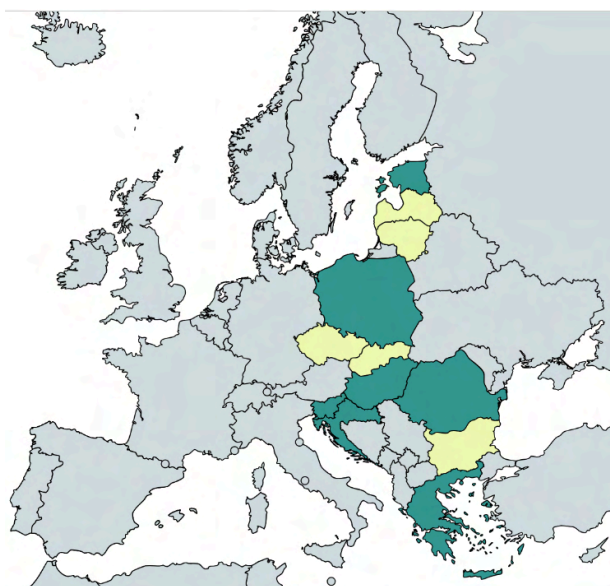


Figure 1. Consortium countries and Replication countries of the Life COMET project

The replication actions were designed to **identify and engage relevant stakeholders** active or interested in community energy and **develop capacity-building events** in each replication country so as to enhance their ability to support energy communities on the national level.

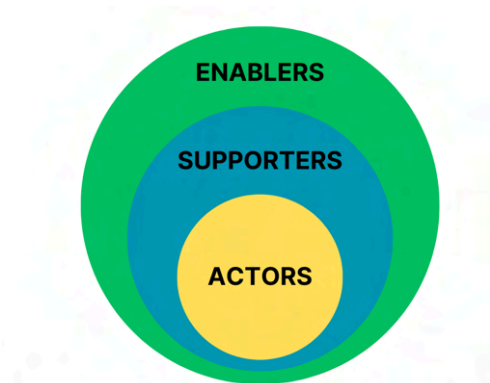
Through these activities, the Life COMET project seeks not only to adapt and test the methodology in different national contexts but also to reinforce regional cooperation, address capacity-building needs, and pave the way for lasting coalitions that can accelerate the community energy movement in Central and Eastern Europe.

A pairing system was set up between replication countries and specific partners of the Life COMET consortium in order to facilitate the activities. The selection of replication countries and their pairing with consortium partners reflects a combination of geographical and socio-cultural affinities, as well as the existing expertise, networks, and capacities of each partner organisation. Neighboring or historically connected countries often share comparable energy system characteristics and regulatory frameworks, while partner organisations bring added value through their long-standing involvement in regional networks and their knowledge of national contexts. By applying a common methodology while allowing for adaptation through regionally anchored partners, the Life COMET project increases the chances of successfully replicating coalition-building efforts across different national contexts. In parallel, a capacity-building needs assessment has been conducted alongside stakeholder mapping in each country, enabling the replication activities to be tailored as closely as possible to the priorities of local actors who are best placed to identify the requirements for advancing a citizen-led energy transition.

1.2 - Methodology for designing capacity-building activities

The **first step of replication activities** consisted in a detailed **mapping exercise of stakeholders in each replication country** so as to identify:

- **Actors:** front-line stakeholders directly involved in or planning to engage with community energy projects (e.g., energy communities, citizen-led initiatives, cooperatives). These entities are typically democratic in governance, oriented towards self-consumption and solidarity, and positioned to drive the citizen-led energy transition.
- **Supporters:** organisations that contribute indirectly to the development of community energy by providing expertise, networks, funding, research, or advocacy (e.g., universities, NGOs, local authorities, foundations, and market actors).
- **Enablers:** stakeholders with the power to shape the framework conditions for community energy, including regulators, governmental authorities, distribution and transmission system operators, and financial institutions.



**Actors are the core of the coalition,
Supporters are the outter sphere and
Enablers are in the wider ecosystem.**

Figure 2. Structure of the coalition with Actors, Supporters & Enablers¹

This categorisation was integrated into a tailor-made mapping tool developed by Electra Energy. The analysis of the mapping by each paired partner of the consortium led to the identification of ***potential frontrunners*** in each country, or stakeholders with a clear interest and high potential to play a prominent role in the support of energy community development on national or regional level.

The **second step** consisted of assessing the capacity-building needs of the *potential frontrunners* in each country. This was done through an online survey and semi-structured interviews assessing the needs regarding the following categories of information:

- Engaging people and building communities;
- Financial resources;
- Technical aspects of community energy projects;
- Regulatory framework;
- Awareness-raising;
- Mapping and connecting with other citizen-led initiatives;
- Other capacity-building needs.

This crucial step allowed the Life COMET partners to acquire a more in-depth and practical understanding of each replication countries' context for energy community development and was used as a foundation to build the capacity-building events that followed.

The stakeholder mapping and capacity building needs assessment carried out across the replication countries revealed diverse stages of development and engagement around energy communities, yet also a set of common challenges and opportunities. Overall, the exercise confirmed that while the enabling framework for energy communities is progressing, the level of maturity and citizen participation varies significantly across countries.

Across all replication countries, the need for capacity building emerged as a central theme. Partners identified recurrent gaps in technical knowledge, financing models, community engagement strategies, and understanding of regulation or advocating for more adapted regulatory frameworks. The most advanced contexts expressed needs related to scaling up and

¹ See Deliverable D2.1 of the Life COMET project - National community energy stakeholders map

diversification (e.g., integrating new technologies and engaging more actors), whereas less mature contexts emphasised basic awareness raising and community mobilisation.

Several cross-cutting insights emerged from the comparative analysis. First, municipalities are consistently key enablers, often acting as entry points for community energy initiatives. Second, while regulatory frameworks are gradually improving, limited transparency and administrative complexity still hinder implementation. Third, awareness and citizen motivation remain low in most contexts, often due to competing incentives such as individual household subsidies in Lithuania. Finally, peer learning and coalition building appear to be key levers for accelerating development, particularly where frontrunners or active networks already exist.

The **third step** of the replication process thus entailed the organisation of capacity-building events dedicated to replication country actors and tailored to their needs. Planned at first as a series of 2 online webinars, followed by an on-site event, it was later adapted to better fit both the needs of local partners and build on existing opportunities that would allow a better integration of the Life COMET activities into the local or national events schedules.

In the case of Bulgaria, based on the key frontrunners identified, their local presence and roots, but also the particular involvement of municipalities in emerging projects, two in-person workshops were organised instead of one to address their needs. On the other hand, in addition to the in-person workshops, an online session with a much wider geographical scope was set-up to build on a cross-border cooperation opportunity throughout the Western Balkan countries and bring a more diverse perspective on community energy and coalition building.

In the case of Latvia and Lithuania, workshops were grouped together to address the smaller size of the countries in the region² and the will to emphasize peer-to-peer learning sessions between key stakeholders. While Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have different legal frameworks for energy communities, they face similar demographics and socio-cultural backgrounds when it comes to citizen-led initiatives. They also have in common limited networks of well-identified actors that are supporting energy community development, which made smaller-scale working sessions more appropriate.

As for the Czech Republic, with a well-rooted and developed national coalition of energy communities already in place in the country, the proposed capacity-building sessions by the Life COMET partners were adapted to fit an audience of energy communities directly, members of the national coalition, rather than the potential frontrunners of the coalition itself. Events were also integrated into an existing schedule, leveraging pre-identified platforms (such as the URBIS conference for Smart Cities) to reach a wider audience and deliver very tangible examples of energy community development from Poland.

² The 3 Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania represent together a population of 6.12 million (Eurostat).

2 - Capacity building workshops

This section provides a detailed report of the context and capacity-building activities led in each replication country. The lists of participants for each event have been anonymized for the public version of this report but kept in to provide a detailed overview of the number and type of stakeholders attending the events.

2.1 Capacity building activities in Bulgaria

2.1.1 Context and assessment of energy communities in Bulgaria

Community energy in Bulgaria is at an early but promising stage of development. The introduction of legal definitions for Renewable Energy Communities (RECs) and Citizen Energy Communities (CECs) through amendments to the Law on Energy from Renewable Sources in 2023 represents an important milestone in aligning the country with European Union energy policy. The legislation incorporates key principles such as open and voluntary participation, community control, and autonomy, creating a formal basis for citizen-led energy initiatives. However, despite this legislative progress, significant implementation gaps remain. Practical procedures for establishing and operating energy communities are not yet fully defined, responsibilities among institutions are unclear, and secondary legislation is still lacking. As a result, citizens, municipalities, and local organizations face considerable uncertainty when attempting to develop community energy projects.

At the same time, growing interest among municipalities, civil society organizations, and local stakeholders demonstrates the potential for community energy to contribute to Bulgaria's energy transition. Stakeholders have identified several priorities for further development, including greater public awareness, stronger citizen engagement, access to blended financing mechanisms, and clearer regulatory guidance. There is also a need to diversify community energy models beyond solar photovoltaics to include areas such as heating and cooling, building renovations, geothermal energy, and biomass. Capacity building, peer learning, and networking with successful initiatives in Bulgaria and abroad are seen as essential for overcoming existing barriers.

During our visits to Sofia and Plovdiv, discussions with stakeholders revealed a sense of disappointment despite the gradual progress made in establishing a legal framework for energy communities. This frustration is closely linked to Bulgaria's prolonged political instability and the succession of repeated elections in recent years, which have limited policy continuity and slowed the implementation of reforms. In such a constantly changing environment, community energy is often perceived as a lower priority compared to more immediate political and economic challenges. As a result, citizens and local actors interested in developing community-led energy initiatives frequently encounter administrative barriers, unclear procedures, and a general lack of institutional support, which can undermine motivation and delay project development.

Stakeholders consistently highlighted that stronger coordination and long-term commitment are needed to transform the existing legislative framework into practical opportunities on the ground. In this context, the creation of a National Community Energy Coalition was widely recognised as a promising solution. Such a platform could bring together municipalities, civil society organisations, citizen groups, energy experts, and national authorities, providing a stable mechanism for collaboration that is less vulnerable to political changes. By facilitating knowledge exchange,

advocacy, capacity building, and collective action, the coalition could help accelerate the development of community energy projects and maintain momentum regardless of shifts in the political landscape.

The positive response to suggested collective actions demonstrates the latent potential of the emerging community energy movement in Bulgaria when provided with targeted support and coordination. In December 2025, with the support of Greenpeace Bulgaria, which facilitated initial outreach to interested municipalities, a Declaration on a shared vision for community energy was circulated and subsequently endorsed by a significant number of local authorities. This showed that, despite the existing regulatory and institutional barriers, there is considerable willingness among municipalities to engage with and support the concept of community energy.

Similarly, following the stakeholders' recent visits and consultations in Sofia and Plovdiv, a policy letter addressed to the national energy ministers was shared with members of the emerging network for endorsement and dissemination. The strong engagement with this initiative further highlighted the appetite among local actors for a more coordinated approach to advocacy and sector development. These examples suggest that one of the key challenges facing community energy in Bulgaria is not a lack of interest but rather the absence of structures capable of mobilising stakeholders, facilitating cooperation, and translating shared ambitions into collective action. This reinforces the case for establishing a National Community Energy Coalition as a platform for coordination, representation, and long-term sector development.

2.1.2 Context and assessment of energy communities in the Western Balkans

Since its establishment, Electra Energy has maintained a strong interest in the Balkan region, recognising both the shared challenges and the untapped opportunities for cross-border collaboration in the field of community energy. In 2025, this commitment led to the implementation of the "Electra Goes Balkan" research expedition, during which the team visited [Kosovo](#), Albania, Serbia, and North Macedonia. The visits focused on building relationships with local stakeholders, exploring the potential for the creation of national community energy coalitions inspired by the Greek experience, identifying innovative business models and successful practices, and gaining a deeper understanding of regional energy poverty challenges. Funded through a private grant from the European Climate Foundation, the initiative also generated valuable insights that complemented the objectives of the LifeLOOP, Life COMET, and GENDER4POWER projects.

One of the key outcomes of this work was the identification of a strong demand for continued knowledge exchange and peer learning among community energy actors across the region and a tangible interest from Kosovar partners to start a coalition. This led to the establishment of the Wider Balkans Working Group, conceived as an informal platform for maintaining relationships, strengthening capacities, and supporting the early stages of community energy development and coalition-building efforts. While not directly funded by a specific project, the Working Group brings together stakeholders connected to multiple initiatives and creates opportunities for experienced actors, including members of [Desmi](#), the Greek energy community coalition supported via the Life COMET project, to share practical lessons and expertise. The concept was presented to partners in Bulgaria, who recognised its value as a capacity-building opportunity for the emerging coalition. Following discussions with participants, it was agreed that the Working Group would meet on a bi-monthly basis to facilitate ongoing collaboration and exchange.

2.1.3 First capacity building workshop in Bulgaria (in-person): Community Energy in Practice - Municipalities as leaders of the energy transition

Led by Electra Energy Cooperative

Short description of event

The workshop “Community Energy in Practice: Municipalities as leaders of the energy transition” was an in-person event held in Plovdiv aiming at bringing together individuals, organisations, municipalities, companies, and other stakeholders interested in community energy. It took place on the 29th of April 2026 in the Boris Hristov House of Culture with a 2-hour duration. The attendees are considered the founding members of the planned national coalition, and they were presented with all the insights on how to start the initiatives, best practices, and funding opportunities.

Registered participants

The registered participants were 43, and at least 30 of them attended and signed the participant list.

The table below was filled out based on the responses in the registration form, but a lot of participants shared that they are representing more groups or even themselves as interested individuals.

Table 1. Registered participants for the workshop in Plovdiv, Bulgaria

No.	Country	Type of stakeholders
1	Bulgaria	Energy Community
2	Bulgaria	Regional Administration
3	Bulgaria	PhD candidate
4	Bulgaria	Regional Administration
5	Bulgaria	Energy equipment company
6	Bulgaria	Electrical supply company
7	Bulgaria	NGO
8	Bulgaria	University lab
9	Bulgaria	Energy supplier
10	Bulgaria	Energy supplier
11	Bulgaria	Energy supplier
12	Bulgaria	Energy supplier
13	Bulgaria	Municipality
14	Bulgaria	Energy supplier

15	Bulgaria	Energy services company
16	Bulgaria	Electricity distribution company
17	Bulgaria	Workers' chamber
18	Bulgaria	Workers' chamber
19	Bulgaria	Property manager
20	Bulgaria	Engineering company
21	Bulgaria	Electrical supply company
22	Bulgaria	Research institute
23	Bulgaria	Municipality
24	Bulgaria	Cooperative
25	Bulgaria	Municipality
26	Bulgaria	Consultancy company
27	Bulgaria	Consultancy company
28	Bulgaria	Municipality
29	Bulgaria	Municipality
30	Bulgaria	Energy services company
31	Bulgaria	Municipality
32	Bulgaria	Consultancy company
33	Bulgaria	HVAC contractor
34	Bulgaria	Property manager
35	Bulgaria	Property manager
36	Bulgaria	Municipality
37	Bulgaria	Municipality
38	Bulgaria	Municipality
39	Bulgaria	R&D
40	Bulgaria	Municipality
41	Bulgaria	Property manager
42	Bulgaria	Engineering company

Detailed program & supporting documentation



Figure 3. Workshop in Plovdiv, Bulgaria

The organisation of the event was made mainly by Electra Energy, but the Energy Agency of Plovdiv and Greenpeace Bulgaria, which have also expressed interest in coordinating the coalition, were co-organisers. In the preparation of the event, a dedicated [invitation](#) including the agenda was created, along with a registration [form](#), currently closed to new responses. It was then disseminated in local language by the co-organisers. There was also a dedicated [presentation](#) for the workshop.



Figure 4. Abstract of slides presented at the workshop in Plovdiv, Bulgaria

Key takeaways

Thanks to strong dissemination efforts (social media, outreach to local media, etc.), we had 43 registrations from people with diverse backgrounds, and at least 30 actually attended. The topics included insights on how to establish a coalition, replicable cases, and funding opportunities, with additional emphasis on best practices and what replication in Bulgaria could realistically look like. Interpretation proved to be a game-changer for inclusivity, and we were especially glad to see older participants actively engaging in both the event and the follow-up discussion.

At one point, the exchange became so lively that Electra's team felt like "outsiders," which was probably the highlight of the event, as participants were genuinely connecting, sharing concerns, and exploring solutions among themselves. One piece of feedback stood out: several participants said they "didn't know so many people were interested in community energy." This suggests that the space we created, both for accessing information and meeting others, helped reveal a community that many didn't realize already existed.

Regarding the operational context, it became evident that there is some demotivation because of the constant political environment changes, which leads to deprioritisation of community energy development. A lot of technical and administrative barriers are also present, blocking initiatives and ideas from being implemented.

At the end of the session a few next steps, including the webinars, some working groups, facilitated support, and some initial policy ideas, were outlined. This led to direct participation in the first policy activity as a newly formed network - following the example of Life COMET's consortium to send a recommendation letter to national energy ministers suggesting prioritisation of energy communities as a tool to battle the energy crisis. This marked the first extrovert joined effort.

2.1.4 Second capacity building workshop in Bulgaria (in-person): Expert focus group for coalition coordination

Led by Electra Energy Cooperative

Short description of event

Prior to the extrovert workshop in Plovdiv for stakeholders interested in joining a National Community Energy Coalition, Electra Energy Cooperative organised a meeting with potential coordinators or frontrunners of the initiative. Greenpeace Bulgaria and the Energy Agency of Plovdiv have already expressed interest in taking this role, so we provided capacity building to them and some additional NGO representatives that can work as a supportive network for the coalition. The objective was to strengthen their capacity by sharing best practices, coordination insights, future opportunities, political developments, and promising business models. The meeting was held in person in Sofia on the 28th of April 2026 and lasted 1.5 hours.

Registered participants

In total 13 people registered for the meeting, but eventually 10 attended. Although all NGOs that originally registered had a representation.

Table 2. Registered participants for the meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria

No.	Country	Type of stakeholders
1	Bulgaria	NGO
2	Bulgaria	NGO

3	Bulgaria	NGO
4	Bulgaria	NGO
5	Bulgaria	NGO
6	Bulgaria	NGO
7	Bulgaria	NGO
8	Bulgaria	Lawyer
9	Bulgaria	NGO
10	Bulgaria	Municipality
11	Bulgaria	NGO
12	Bulgaria	Energy community
13	Bulgaria	University

Most of the attendees shared that they joined in their own personal capacity as well, being interested individuals on top of organisation representatives.

Detailed program & supporting documentation



Figure 5. Snapshot of the internal meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria

For this meeting, an [invitation](#) was drafted, while confirmations of attendance were managed by email replies that were summarised in a list. As it was an interactive meeting, for the most part we didn't use a presentation on site, but we did prepare a [slide deck](#) that was later shared with the

attendees as a point of reference. To be able to confirm contact details and have a proof of attendance, we had printed papers for participants to sign.

Key takeaways

In Sofia, Electra Energy Cooperative, representing the Life COMET project, met with ten NGO representatives, primarily from Greenpeace and Za Zemiata, to discuss concrete campaign examples, best practices, policy promotion opportunities, recent policy developments, and strategies for coalition-building as they have expressed interest in coordinating their national coalition.

While the discussion was productive, it quickly became clear that there is significant disappointment regarding the progress of community energy initiatives in Bulgaria. This is largely due to ongoing political instability and the absence of a consistent regulatory framework in the country. Some concerns around the practical implementation of community energy policies, limitation of energy-sharing schemes, and other issues were presented as significant bottlenecks.

The meeting was closed but not confidential, so Greenpeace has already published a collaborative [blog post](#) highlighting the potential of energy communities and the emerging coalition being formed with the Energy Agency of Plovdiv. This marks their willingness to keep pushing and raising awareness around the possibilities of national coalition creation.

The key observation is that there is intention to form a long-term strategy for the coalition, based on innovative business models (primarily citizen-led renovation) and democratic governance, with support from an expert network.

2.1.5 First capacity building workshop in the Western Balkans (online)

Led by Electra Energy Cooperative

Short description of event

On the 21st of May 2026, Electra Energy organised a 1.5 hour digital meeting bringing together stakeholders from across the wider Balkan region. The event built on Electra Energy's regional engagement since 2019 and aimed to support the development of the emerging community energy coalition in Bulgaria through knowledge exchange and peer learning. Rather than limiting participation to Bulgarian stakeholders, the meeting was designed to connect actors facing similar challenges and opportunities across neighbouring countries, creating a broader platform for cooperation and mutual support.

The meeting gathered representatives from universities, energy communities, cooperatives, NGOs, financial institutions, municipalities, and other experts active in the community energy field. Members of the Greek Desmi coalition had a strong presence in order to present their experiences and share insights on coalition-building, stakeholder engagement, and community energy development. The group is expected to meet on a bi-monthly basis, coordinated by Electra Energy for its first year, providing a structured space for knowledge sharing, networking, and the discussion of common challenges. This approach will also help capitalize on the interest for

coalition building that has been identified in other countries (e.g. Kosovo & Albania during a field research in March 2025) without having to mobilize extra resources.

For the Bulgarian case, the focus was placed on ensuring participation from stakeholders expected to take on coordination and facilitation roles within the emerging coalition. This was intended to maximise the capacity-building value of the event and support the future development of the network. Given the regional nature of the webinar and its use of English as the working language, these participants were also the ones able to have an active engagement in the discussions and knowledge exchange.

In this first digital meeting, the aim was to share the vision, co-decide on the working group identity & priorities, record shared community energy challenges in an interactive map, and listen to insights from [REScoop.eu](https://rescoop.eu).

Apart from this working group opportunity, there are already discussions for another webinar specifically with Bulgarian actors, but they appear to prefer having it at a more advanced stage of the coalition so we could focus on tangible activities and steps for the longevity of the initiative.

Registered participants

There were 58 registered participants in total, out of whom only 6 were from Bulgaria. 39 people joined the webinar.

Table 3. Registered participants for the first webinar in the Western Balkans

No.	Country	Type of stakeholders
1	Bulgaria	Energy supplier
2	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Cooperative
3	North Macedonia	NGO
4	Kosovo	NGO
5	Germany/Albania	University
6	Slovenia	NGO
7	Bulgaria	NGO
8	Kosovo	NGO
9	Belgium	Federation
10	Serbia	Energy cooperative
11	Slovenia	Private company
12	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Developmental NGO
13	Kosovo	NGO
14	Albania	NGO

15	Bulgaria	Cooperative
16	North Macedonia	Policy institute
17	Albania	NGO
18	Serbia	Comms & Policy expert
19	Croatia	Cooperative
20	Croatia	Cooperative
21	Greece	Energy community / University / Desmi
22	North Macedonia	Innovation lab
23	Greece	Energy community / Desmi
24	Greece	Energy community / Desmi
25	Greece	Energy community / Desmi
26	North Macedonia	University / project representative
27	Greece	University / Desmi
28	Germany	Foundation
29	Türkiye	NGO
30	Greece	Research center
31	Serbia	Political institute
32	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Cooperative
33	Greece	Research center
34	Greece	Research center
35	Greece	Desmi
36	Türkiye	University
37	Serbia	Energy cooperative
38	Romania	NGO
39	Greece	Regional development fund
40	Germany	NGO
41	Germany	NGO

42	Albania	Institute
43	Serbia	NGO
44	Montenegro	NGO
45	Germany	University
46	Bosnia & Herzegovina	NGO
47	Albania	NGO
48	Kosovo	Foundation
49	Türkiye	University
50	Germany	NGO
51	Albania	Energy company
52	Bulgaria	University
53	North Macedonia	University / project representative
54	Bulgaria	Electricity distribution company
55	Kosovo	Community development fund
56	Kosovo	Educational institution
57	Cyprus	NGO
58	Serbia	Energy cooperative

Detailed program & supporting documentation

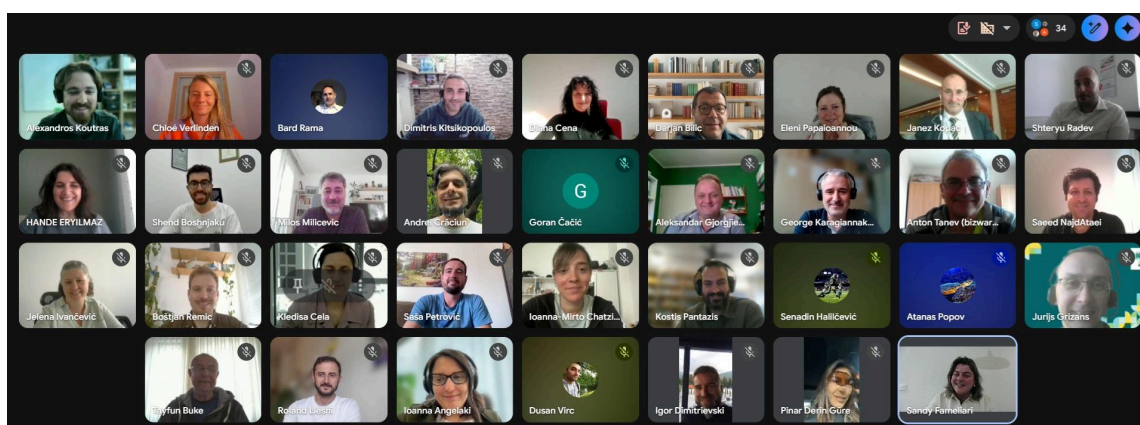


Figure 6. Participants of the first Wider Balkan Working Group

For this webinar an [agenda](#) including a brief description of the idea was created, as well as a registration [form](#) for participants. In order to facilitate the discussion and maintain a flow, a [presentation](#) was also created and used, while an interactive map to co-fill was provided (see Figure below).

Key takeaways

During the call, we had a brief Balkan Mapping session to get to know each other and address the main barriers and challenges each country faces in community energy. Most focused on grid connection delays, missing technical regulations, a lack of secondary legislation, and complex project financing (see map below). We also discussed the working group's format and agreed to skip passive presentations, moving instead to more practical, less formal formats bimonthly.

During the discussion, participants expressed interest in maintaining regular exchanges, leading to the establishment of the Working Group. The next call will probably take place in mid-July. There has been interest in creating subgroups that will focus on specific topics (e.g., business models, proposals for regional projects, etc.), but we will form them at a later stage.



Figure 7. Map of challenges & barriers shared in the Western Balkan webinar

2.2 Capacity building activities in the Czech Republic

2.2.1 Context and assessment for community energy in the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic represents one of the more advanced environments for community energy development in Central and Eastern Europe. The legal framework introduced through the Lex OZE II amendment to the Energy Act established formal provisions for both Renewable Energy Communities (RECs) and Citizen Energy Communities (CECs), recognising principles of open participation, democratic control, and community benefit. Lex OZE III, which entered into force in

August 2025, further strengthened this framework by introducing rules for electricity storage, aggregation, and flexibility, while also expanding the threshold for obtaining licenses from 50 to 100 kWp. These legislative developments have been largely driven by UKEN, the existing national coalition coordinating stakeholders towards common policy advocacy.

The Elektroenergetické datové centrum (EDC), a joint venture between ČEPS, ČEZ Distribuce, E.G.D., and PREdistribuce, has served as the central platform for managing electricity sharing data since August 2024. As of early 2025, the system had already facilitated over 10 GWh of shared electricity, with tens of thousands of consumption points participating. Transitional restrictions on the size and territorial scope of sharing groups are set to be lifted on 1 July 2026, marking a significant step towards a fully operational system. As of June 2026, 125 energy communities are listed in the ERÚ registry - nearly double the number recorded in September 2025 - reflecting rapid growth in the sector.

Despite this progress, barriers remain. Stakeholders point to the complexity of administrative procedures, uncertainties in grid connection processes, and limited availability of tailored financing for citizen-led projects. Public funding programmes such as KOMUNERG and the Modernisation Fund exist but remain difficult to access for smaller initiatives. Citizen participation outside municipal frameworks is still limited, and scaling up beyond early adopters remains a central challenge.

Overall, the Czech Republic offers strong frontrunners and established structures. The key challenge ahead lies in broadening participation, ensuring equitable access to financing, and translating a maturing legislative framework into practice at the community level.

2.2.2 First capacity building workshop (online): Practical insights from the Polish experience

Led by Coop Tech Hub

Short description of event

The webinar “From Seclusion to Participation” was an online event held on the 30th of April 2026 via Zoom, with a duration of 1.5 hours. It was organised in the framework of the Life COMET project, with UKEN, the Czech national community energy coalition, supporting the outreach and invitation of participants. The session aimed to present concrete Polish experience in developing collective prosumer models and energy cooperatives to Czech stakeholders, offering practical insights applicable to the Czech context.

The webinar featured a case study presentation by energy expert Sebastian Bykuć on the pioneering collective prosumer project in Sopot - the first such initiative of its kind in Poland - covering its setup, operational model, financial results, and the key human and organisational factors behind its success.

Registered participants

20 participants registered and 16 participants attended the webinar, all based in the Czech Republic.

Table 4. Registered participants for the first webinar in Czech Republic

No.	Country	Stakeholder organisation
1	Czech Republic	Pražská energetika, a.s.
2	Czech Republic	člen SVJ BD
3	Slovakia	EkF TUKE
4	Slovakia	SVB 1787/31 Trenčín - Zlatovce
5	Czech Republic	Tedom energie s.r.o.
6	Czech Republic	FF UK
7	Czech Republic	ENERKOM Podlipansko
8	Czech Republic	DCHB
9	Slovakia	Greenpeace Slovensko
10	Czech Republic	Enerkom Dolní Pojizeří a Polabí
11	Czech Republic	MAS Lužnice z.s.
12	Czech Republic	Enerkom Jablunkovsko, z.s.
13	Czech Republic	Energie LK, s. r. o.
14	Czech Republic	Místní akční skupina Hlubocko-Lišovsko o.p.s.
15	Czech Republic	MAS Hranicko z. s.
16	Czech Republic	ASITIS s.r.o.
17	Krajkova	MAS Brána do Českého ráje, z.s.
18	Czech Republic	Enerkom SKCh
19	Czech Republic	Unicorn
20	Czech Republic	NCPEK

Detailed program & supporting documentation

The agenda of the webinar was structured as follows:

- Models in Poland – short introduction: energy cooperatives, energy clusters, citizen energy communities
- Collective prosumer in multi-apartment buildings – general rules: PV installation and energy sharing among residents, key benefits and how the cost reduction works, main challenges (legal, technical, organisational)
- Use case – Sopot 2025: project setup (housing estate and PV installation), operational and financial model, results in terms of savings and self-consumption rate
- Q&A session

The session was not recorded at the speaker's request, and the presentation was not made available for public sharing. Supporting documentation includes screenshots from the session.

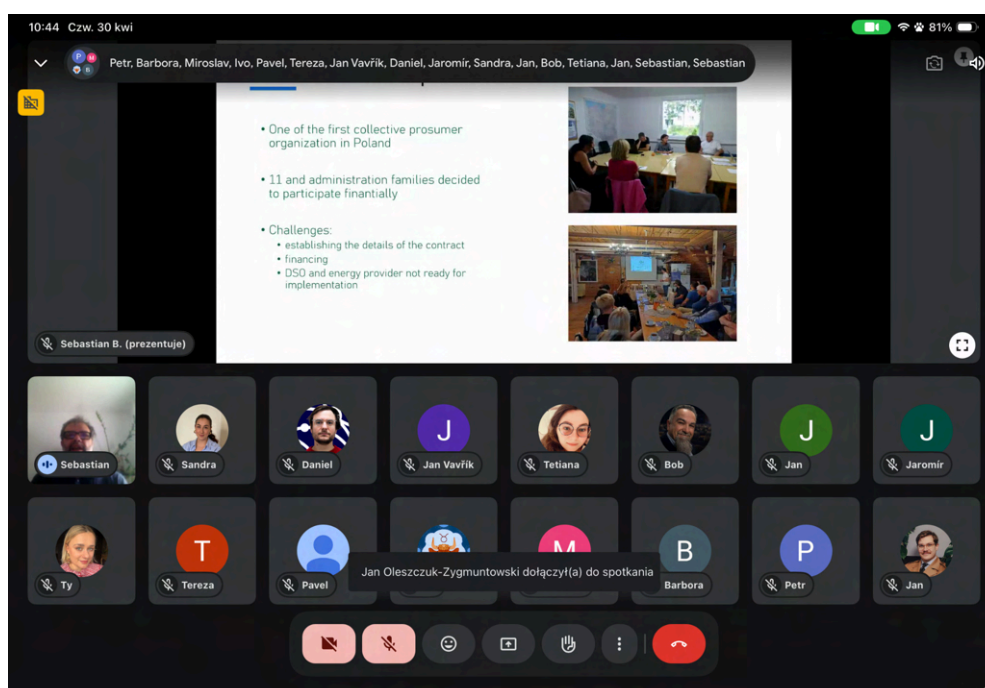


Figure 8. Screenshot of the first capacity building webinar for the Czech Republic

Key takeaways

The Sopot case study demonstrated to Czech participants that developing a collective prosumer project is achievable, though it requires significant perseverance, commitment, and community openness. The most resource-intensive aspect of the project was direct engagement with residents — conversations, education, and trust-building at the grassroots level. Despite the process taking approximately one and a half years, participants learned that this investment in human relationships is what ultimately made the project viable and beneficial for residents.

The key message that resonated with the Czech audience was that success in community energy is not primarily a technical or regulatory challenge — it is a human one. Networking, door-to-door engagement, and support from academic institutions were identified as the decisive factors that enabled the Sopot project to move from idea to implementation.

2.2.3 Second capacity building workshop in the Czech Republic (in-person): From Resistance to Cooperation - How to reach municipalities and communities with the energy cooperative idea

Led by Coop Tech Hub

Short description of event

The second capacity building event was an in-person workshop held on the 3rd of June 2026 in Brno, organised on the occasion of the URBIS conference - a major annual urban development and smart cities event in the Czech Republic. The session was organised by CoopTech Hub in cooperation with UKEN, which supported local outreach and participant mobilisation. 24 participants attended and signed the attendance list.

The workshop was led by Magda Domańska (CoopTech Hub) and built on the Polish experience of developing energy cooperatives and engaging municipalities, drawing directly on the work carried out within the Life COMET project. The session presented two in-depth case studies from Polish municipalities - Radzymin and Nadarzyn - illustrating different pathways to establishing energy communities and the practical challenges encountered along the way.

Registered participants

25 participants attended the in-person workshop in Brno. A signed attendance list was collected on-site.

Table 5. List of participants to the workshop in Brno, Czech Republic

No.	Country	Type of stakeholders
1	Czech	NGO/Foundation/Network
2	Czech	NGO/Foundation/Network
3	Czech	NGO/Foundation/Network
4	Czech	NGO/Foundation/Network
5	Czech	NGO/Foundation/Network
6	Moravia	Energy community
7	Slovakia	Energy community
8	Czech	Regulator/Asset owner

9	Czech	Other
10	Czech	Other
11	Czech	Other
12	Czech	Local and Regional Governments
13	Czech	Other
14	Czech	Local and Regional Governments
15	Czech	Academic and Research Institutes
16	Czech	Academic and Research Institutes
17	Czech	Academic and Research Institutes
18	Czech	Local and Regional Governments
19	Czech	Energy community
20	Czech	Other
21	Czech	Other
22	Czech	Other
23	Czech	Governmental Organisation/Public-Private Actor
24	Czech	Governmental Organisation/Public-Private Actor
25	Czech	NGO/Foundation/Network

Detailed program & supporting documentation

The workshop was structured around a 60-minute lecture entitled "From Resistance to Cooperation: How to reach municipalities and communities with the idea of an energy cooperative", followed by a Q&A session. The presentation covered:

- Three pathways for engaging municipalities: top-down (working with local authorities), bottom-up (working with residents and NGOs), and cross-sector networking through existing cooperative networks

- Case study Radzymin: a municipality near Warsaw where a bottom-up initiative led by a local councillor resulted in a detailed energy and economic analysis, identification of existing PV assets, and ultimately a decision to build an agricultural-municipal biogas plant as the core of the energy cooperative
- Case study Nadarzyn: a municipality where the mayor initiated the process top-down, leading to the formal registration of Nadarzyńska Spółdzielnia Energetyczna in March 2025, currently operating in test mode with three members and four generation sources
- Synthesis of lessons learned: what works and what does not in community energy development, based on eighteen months of fieldwork within the Life COMET project



Figure 9. Pictures from the capacity building workshop in Brno, Czech Republic

Key takeaways

The Q&A session generated active discussion among participants, with questions focusing on the cooperative model more broadly - and notably on how to overcome the negative historical connotations of the word “cooperative” in post-communist Central European societies, a challenge shared by both Poland and the Czech Republic.

Magda Domańska responded that the key lies in continuous networking and a gradual shift in mindset: once people - whether residents, municipal officials, or local leaders - directly experience the tangible benefits of cooperative action, their skepticism tends to dissolve permanently. The human factor was identified as the central element of success: finding the right person within each community or institution, someone who already holds trust and is willing to champion the idea from the inside, is more important than any regulatory or technical argument.

Participants noted the strong relevance of the Polish cases to the Czech context, given shared cooperative traditions and similar social dynamics around collective action. The URBIS conference setting also provided an opportunity for informal exchanges between participants after the session, reinforcing the networking dimension of the event.

2.3 Capacity building activities in Latvia & Lithuania

2.3.1 Context and assessment for Latvia

Energy communities in Latvia are at an early stage of development with considerable potential for growth. NGOs and interested parties under the national level umbrella organization "Latvian Rural Forum" and other local or nationwide institutions are gradually becoming more engaged in promoting Renewable Energy Communities (RECs) and Citizen Energy Communities (CECs) through the consistent advocacy efforts of already active participants in the field. Although the prospects of establishing energy communities in Latvia with the current regulations are promising, the existing model is referred to by one of the national frontrunners as "old-school" and not functional. In recent years Latvia introduced a legal framework that allows for the creation and operation of energy communities, with amendments to the Energy Law and Electricity Law effective from January 2023.³ In order to be able to access the support mechanisms and participate in energy sharing schemes, the emerging energy communities must register in the Energy Community Register.

One of the key obstacles is financial sustainability. As the current national funding landscape is fragmented and lacks easily accessible tailored tools for financial planning, emerging communities have limited knowledge and confidence in taking on the endeavour of establishing an energy community. Despite the obstacles, as of March 2025, the first legal entity of its kind, an energy community called "*Pirmā energokopiena*,"⁴ was established.

The gaps the project survey identified are now reflected on the ground level, in practice, through the first energy community. Its struggle to get electricity traders to offer sharing services, despite the legal framework being technically in place, illustrates the survey's point that regulation exists formally but practicalities remain unclear and underdeveloped. For example, in Latvia the law technically allows households to share solar electricity. However, there is no applicable way to do it, because traders are not offering sharing contracts to ordinary households yet. The community's founder addressed this by creating a middleman organisation that brings together households' electricity use, handles billing between neighbours and negotiates with the trader as one combined customer. It's a practical solution to the kind of financing and operational gap survey respondents said the national framework was missing.

The survey also pointed to several other gaps. Communities need expert advice and technical training to understand installation, operation, and maintenance. Though respondents were clear that fixing the legislative framework comes first. On the technical side, respondents called for support beyond solar PV, including geothermal and biomass formats along with more shared knowledge on real-world implementation pathways. Awareness of energy communities remains low among both citizens and municipalities, which respondents said calls for new approaches to capacity building. Connections between grassroots initiatives have so far formed organically rather than through deliberate effort, although respondents saw room for more. Finally, an existing government grant-back scheme for private household renewables was flagged as an unintended obstacle, since it reduces the incentive to build collective energy communities instead.

³ Legal Acts of the Republic of Latvia, Energy Law: <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/49833>

⁴ Latvia's first energy community wants to unite Riga's unrenovated apartment buildings. Green Liberty <https://www.zalabriviba.lv/latvijas-pirma-energokopiena-velas-apvienot-rigas-nerenovetas-daudzdzivoklu-ekas/>

2.3.2 Context and assessment for Lithuania

Although Lithuania has made progress in defining Renewable Energy Communities (RECs) and Citizen Energy Communities (CECs) in legislation, the emerging movement of energy communities in general is seen more as a niche topic, with the overall support structure for community-led renewable energy initiatives remaining incomplete.

The current legal framework provides a basis for citizen-led energy initiatives in the multi-apartment housing sector. Yet, the overall framework presents challenges. The formation of an energy community requires the creation of a formal legal entity and regulatory approval even for small-scale projects.⁵ Additionally, existing legal structures favor individual participation through the more attractive remote prosumer scheme, which in turn discourages collective energy action. Although the overall legal framework exists, it requires significant simplification, increased transparency, and stronger institutional backing to effectively support the growth of RECs and CECs in Lithuania.

From a technical standpoint, one of the main challenges is the lack of transparency around grid availability, which in turn impedes potential communities from accurately assessing their feasibility to start energy production. Another relevant challenge in establishing energy communities is a non-coherent funding scheme. The remote prosumer scheme remains more attractive than forming energy communities, further discouraging collective action. Despite the technical and financial hurdles, among others, there is notable potential to develop an established network of energy communities.

Engaging people and building communities is not a current priority, as regulation restricts the creation and scaling of energy communities. Respondents of the survey highlighted the restrictive national rules as a central barrier. The process of forming a legal entity is bureaucratic. Energy communities must additionally secure permission to produce energy and gain formal recognition, a requirement prosumers under 100kW do not face. This gap has practical consequences. Many emerging initiatives are bypassing energy communities altogether in favour of the remote prosumer scheme, which is currently easier to access and, in several respects, more attractive. Compounding this, a funding scheme that supported the sector through 2023-2024 has ended with no successor in sight, as the regulatory environment discourages new initiatives from forming.

Awareness raising is not a priority for now, given an already average level of knowledge on the topic, but it is expected to become a clear need once regulatory and legal restrictions are eased. Mapping and connections with other citizen-led initiatives have developed organically rather than through dedicated effort, and existing initiatives already recognize one another and collaborate on certain topics. Finally, with no formal or informal coalition currently in place, establishing one, or at least a stakeholder interest group, would be a reasonable step in the near future. At present, a single individual concentrates most of the knowledge needed for community energy development, spanning regulatory, technical, and funding advisory support.

⁵ Interviewee response in the T5.1 survey for Capacity Building Assessment in Replication Countries

2.3.3 First capacity building workshop in Latvia & Lithuania (online): Online knowledge sharing between Baltic countries

Led by TalTech

Short description of event

The goal for the first round was to do a meet and greet as well as engage into introductory discussions over energy communities and its potential in the Baltics. This would lay the groundwork for more precise discussions on what is happening in the countries and what could be done to improve it. The sessions were held separately with the key stakeholders but analysed as one.

Registered participants

Table 6. List of participants to the first webinars with Latvian & Lithuanian stakeholders

No.	Country	Type of stakeholders
1	Latvia	NGO/expert
2	Latvia	NGO/expert
3	Lithuania	NGO/expert
4	Estonia	Energy community organization
5	Estonia	University

Detailed program & supporting documentation

Meeting agenda:

- Meet & Greet
- The concept of community energy in Latvia/Lithuania
- Stakeholders
- Enablers
- Potential
- Defining the goal for these workshops

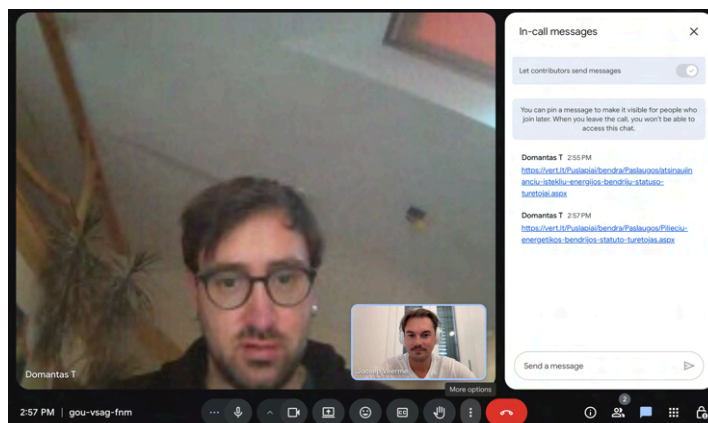


Figure 10. Screenshot of the online meeting with representative from Lithuania

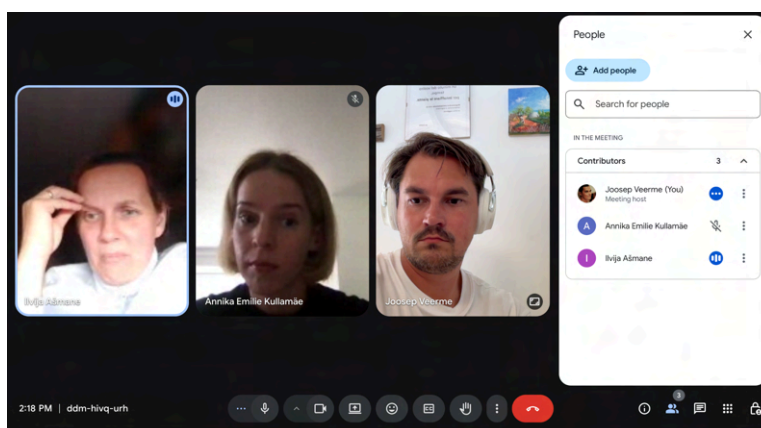


Figure 11. Screenshot of the online meeting with representative from Latvia



Figure 12. Screenshot of the online meeting with representative from Latvia

Key takeaways

The representatives of the Baltic countries discussed how locals and government officials view community energy and where the views come from. Discussions focused on the development potential and what kind of community initiatives have been planned as well as which have succeeded and why.

- Domantas Tracevičius, the expert from Lithuania, pointed out that the list of registered energy communities is quite long, but these are merely empty shells. Since it's more beneficial to be a prosumer, the popularity or interest towards community energy has been lacking. He also pointed out that there are not many stakeholders, so a national coalition would probably not be viable in Lithuania at this point in time. Majority of the regulatory development and consultations land on very few stakeholders.
- Ilvija Ašmane, as a representative for rural community projects in Latvia mentioned that there is sufficient interest and potential in community projects, although there is no concrete national structure on the topic. There are a few stakeholders, and even the national energy provider is somewhat interested in the topic, but everything revolves around where the money goes. Similarly to Estonia the original Western/ Southern Europe concept of need based development is scarce in the Baltics.

- Krista Petersone's work is primarily in city environments, mainly focusing on multi-apartment entities in Latvia. Similarly to Estonia, larger-scale renovations on apartment complexes built roughly 50 years ago are currently showing significant interest towards community energy, combining renovation with PV and battery systems.
- All stakeholders agreed that although we know each other at least on a name basis, given the very small size of each country, there is potential and worth in better communication and driving the topic on a Baltic level.
- A goal was set for the workshop series to highlight national wins and shortcomings, pinpoint the flaws, and seek outsider advice and feedback (from other EU nations) on the defined shortcomings that are underlined in the second capacity building workshop.

2.3.4 Second capacity building workshop in Latvia & Lithuania (online): Community Energy in the Baltic States

Led by TalTech

Short description of event

The aim of the second joint meeting, which took place online on the 24th of March 2026 for 1.5 hours, was to share the current state of each respective country's developments in moving towards frameworks enabling fully functional energy communities.

Registered participants

Table 7. List of participants to the first webinar with Latvian & Lithuanian stakeholders

No.	Country	Type of stakeholders
1	Estonia	Regional Energy agency member
2	Latvia	NGO/expert
3	Latvia	NGO/expert
4	Lithuania	NGO/expert
5	Estonia	Energy community organization
6	Estonia	University

Detailed program & supporting documentation

Meeting agenda:

- Introduction
- Country descriptions
- Country needs
- Key restrictors
- Speakers for Latvia
- Planning the next session



Figure 13. Screenshot of the online meeting with Latvian and Lithuanian stakeholders

Key takeaways

The representatives of the Baltic countries discussed the state of community energy development, with a focus on legislative progress, different funding mechanisms, and practical barriers that hinder proper implementation.

- Estonian representative Nele outlined a long journey towards establishing a path to better conditions. She noted that when she joined TREA (Tartu Regional Energy agency) in 2014, a mentor program for energy cooperatives with analysis and technical support was established, but the program never came into full fruition because of the need for more elaborate support. She noted that in recent years one of the key achievements has been the inclusion of community energy in the Energy Economy Development Plan 2035 (ENMAK 2035 - *Energiamajanduse Arengukava 2035*) that was approved in January 2026, as well as the establishment of a national coalition of relevant stakeholders, bringing together energy agencies, the DSO, ministries, municipalities and civil society organisations. One of the promising active projects, the biogas initiative across 11-12 meat farms and a district heating scheme in Saaremaa Island, was highlighted. Despite the progress, she noted that political and financial support for small-scale community energy remains limited, with the ministry continuing to favour large-scale wind and solar.
- The Latvian representatives, Krista and Ilvija, highlighted a decade of advocacy work and the importance of cross-border collaboration through networks such as Bankwatch and Interreg. A significant development is an incoming €9 million grant program for energy communities and multi-apartment buildings. However, even with grants and direct advancements made by advocacy work, key challenges still remain. Communities are

currently set up to share money rather than actual energy, provider agreements are difficult to navigate, and the market-dominating DSO presents both opportunities and constraints.

- The Lithuanian representative, Domantas, discussed the country's key issue of a strong prosumer model that prevents energy communities from emerging. One in eleven consumers is already a prosumer, supported by net metering and financial incentives. With 16 registered energy community non-profits and €200 million in grants and subsidised loans directed at municipality-led initiatives, legislative foundations are in place. The central challenge, however, is making the case for collective energy ownership in a context where the individual prosumer route remains faster, simpler, and better supported financially.

2.3.5 Third capacity building workshop (online/in-person)

Led by Joosep Veerme (TalTech), Ioanna Angelaki (Electra Energy), Rafael Milerman (Estonian LEADER Union)

Short description of event

The third workshop, which featured presentations leading into an open discussion, took place in person on the 6th of May at the European Energy Communities Forum of 2026, in Jurmala, Latvia, for 1.5 hours. Considering that the conditions and actual outputs for community energy development vary in the Baltic countries, the presentations provided an insight into the status, key challenges, and information about respected countries' coalitions. To give an overview of the possibilities of development, a representative from the Greek coalition and Electra Energy Cooperative provided in-depth reflections on key factors for success for the development of a national coalition as well as a transnational cooperation effort such as the Western Balkan initiative led by Electra Energy Cooperative (see section 2.1.5 of this report). The insight of an advanced coalition and cross-border cooperation offered significant insight and inspiration for what could be achieved in the Baltics should the considerable obstacles be overcome.

Registered participants

All together, 35 participants took part in the workshop, with 8 coming from Baltic countries.

Table 8. List of participants to the in-person capacity building workshop with Latvian & Lithuanian stakeholders

No.	Country	Type of stakeholders
1	Netherlands	Community organization
2	Belgium	Research
3	Latvia	NGO/expert
4	Poland	Private sector
5	Bulgaria	Network/association
6	Spain	Private sector
7	Luxembourg	Network/association

8	UK	Community organization
9	Austria	Public sector
10	Germany	NGO/Advocacy
11	Latvia	Research/University
12	Croatia	Community organization
13	Netherlands	Research/University
14	Hungary	Community organization
15	Estonia	University
16	Lithuania	Private sector/energy company
17	Latvia	Public sector (RPR - Riga Planning Region)
18	Romania	Advocacy
19	Romania	Network/Association
20	Greece	NGO/expert
21	Estonia	Community organization
22	Estonia	Community organization
23	Bulgaria	Advocacy
24	Serbia	Public sector
25	Poland	N/A
26	USA	Freelancer
27	Bosnia and Herzegovina	NGO
28	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Network/Association
29	Kosovo	Advocacy
30	Albania	Private sector
31	France	Network/Association
32	Ireland	Network/Association
33	Croatia	Community organization
34	France	Network/Association
35	Germany	Research

Detailed program & supporting documentation

The workshop presentations about the Baltic States were derived from semi-structured interviews held with national representatives prior to the session. Nele Ivask (TREA - Tartu Regional Energy Agency - Estonia), Krista Petersone (Green Liberty, Riga Energy Agency - Latvia), Ilvija Ašmane (Latvian Rural Forum - Latvia), Domantas Tracevičius (*Ziedine ekonomika* - Lithuania) each shared their country's current state of community energy development, including legislative progress, funding landscape, and key barriers. The feedback and ideas of these conversations were lightly edited into a condensed version for the presentation. Where possible, participant observations were kept close to their original phrasing to preserve the intent behind what was said. Where the conversations didn't fully cover a topic, additional context was drawn from existing background research to fill in the gaps. In addition, the idea to add a complementary presentation from the Greek coalition and Western Balkan cooperation emerged through online meetings with the coordinator.

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10:30 – 11:00

Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:30

 **Money, money, money: mapping funding opportunities for energy communities**

Room: ASPAZIJA + RAINIS

Facilitator: Chris Vrettos

Over the past year, there have been multiple developments around the EU funding landscape for energy communities. This session will take stock of updates around the Social Climate Fund, the ENERCOM Facility, the EU budget negotiations (2028-2034), and Cohesion Funds, providing concrete tips and guidance on how members can access them. Participants will also be able to interact with alternative and cooperative financiers.

 **Learning across borders: building and strengthening national community energy coalitions**

Room: VALDEMARS

Facilitator: Joosep Veermoe

Community energy initiatives across Europe face similar regulatory, organisational and financing challenges, yet operate in diverse national contexts. Inspired by the experiences of the Life COMET project, this workshop brings together practitioners and coalition builders from across Europe, with a particular focus on the Baltic region and practical insights from the Balkans.

Participants will explore how cross-border information exchange and cooperation can strengthen national community energy coalitions and support regulatory improvements. Through examples from Baltic countries and experiences of regional cooperation in the Balkans, they will share lessons, identify transferable practices, and discuss concrete mechanisms for ongoing collaboration, turning national insights into collective European progress for community energy.

Figure 14. Screenshot of the Baltic States workshop information on the event webpage

Link to the program: <https://www.energycommunitiesforum.eu/day-2>





Figure 15. Pictures of the event - © [REScoop.eu](https://rescoop.eu) - day 2 of the Forum

Key takeaways

All three Baltic States face an implementation gap, even after having transposed the EU regulation.

- In Estonia, community energy is legally defined, with key challenges of little to no political support for small-scale community energy initiatives, a gap between the legal definitions and practical enablers, no support scheme, grid ring-fencing, and lack of financing tools.
- Latvia has been granted a 9.2 million grant program to assist registered energy communities and multi-apartment buildings in purchasing solar panels and energy storage equipment. On the other side of that coin emerge key challenges in long-term sustainability without subsidies, communities currently sharing money rather than actual kWh, and communication bottlenecks between DSOs and communities.
- In Lithuania 1 in 11 consumers is already a prosumer. Around 60 energy communities exist, where only 4 are actively using renewable resources. Due to the attractive prosumer model, one of the key challenges Lithuania faces is promoting the benefits of owning energy collectively. Within that frame the already available net metering and individual subsidies outcompete collective model benefits.
- The Greek "Desmi" coalition highlighted that for a successful coalition, trust and governance matter as much as regulation. Noting that some of the key factors for success lie behind cultivating strong interpersonal connections with members - the inclusion of honorary members, such as NGOs and field experts, and the creation of a commonly agreed-upon vision statement among members.
- A discussion on starting a Pan-Baltic Community Energy Coalition was initiated following the presentations with stakeholders from all three states. The idea would incubate communication within the area and support cross-border knowledge transfer as well as lay the groundwork for potential mutual projects. The coalition would also help in boosting trust and giving more power to community energy when communicating with officials on regulations and potential funding.
- The three states are at completely different development levels and also have approached community energy in completely different ways. Combining them would form a solid

starting point to a working system. Active knowledge and case study sharing could benefit all three in the future.

3 - Impacts and key takeaways

3.1 Impacts of the capacity building activities

In total, 4 webinars and 4 in-person workshops were held between March and June 2026. A total of 196 participants joined either an online or in-person workshop on energy communities and fostering the development of national coalitions. Overall, the format and expected outcomes differed widely from one country to another, mostly based on the existing level of interest and knowledge in the topic of community energy and the implication and availability of potential frontrunners for national coalitions.

3.2 Key overall takeaways

Several key lessons can be drawn from the capacity building events deployed throughout the replication countries. While the local contexts and levels of maturity of the energy communities and stakeholder ecosystems differed significantly from one country to another, a number of general takeaways emerge.

Creating a space for exchange and energy community ecosystem building

One of the most significant contributions of the Life COMET replication activities was its ability to bring together stakeholders who would not necessarily have interacted otherwise. Beyond the transfer of knowledge and technical information, the events created a space for dialogue, networking, and peer exchange between citizens, community energy practitioners, local authorities, civil society organisations and other relevant actors.

In some countries, participants underlined that the events helped reveal the existence of a wider scope of actors interested in energy community development. This was especially the case in Bulgaria for instance. As noted by Sandy Fameliari from Electra Energy Cooperative *"the space we created, both for accessing information and meeting others, helped reveal a community that many didn't realize already existed."* In this sense, the benefits of capacity building activities of the project went beyond increasing stakeholder skills and contributed to fostering an energy community ecosystem.

Tailoring capacity building approaches to local contexts

A second key takeaway from the capacity building activities of the Life COMET project was the importance of adapting both the format and content of replication activities to the local contexts. As mentioned earlier, each replication country presented very different levels of community energy development, ranging from different levels of awareness, regulatory frameworks, stakeholder engagement, etc. The implementation of the capacity building activities confirmed that there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach, no single capacity building format that can be replicated identically across all contexts. This is true for the content of the workshops and webinars developed to fit the

needs of the local stakeholders, but also in terms of format, adapting it between open or closed sessions and introductory or more in-depth discussions. In the case of Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonian stakeholders, for instance, the approach was from the start to initiate a three-country conversation led by the Estonian partners, exchanging information about energy community development in each country on an equal ground but also looking beyond to a more thorough cooperation between energy community actors in all the Baltic States.

Replication in this context is seen as a process of empowerment rather than duplication of the same model. Throughout the Life COMET project, replication activities meant creating opportunities for exchange, networking, and building capacities for communities to define their own path towards energy community support and development. The activities demonstrated that stakeholders often draw inspiration from successful examples elsewhere but ultimately seek to adapt these lessons to local institutional, social, and economic realities. It is particularly the case when working toward creating a national coalition of energy communities, where actors have to build common ground and common objectives to support energy communities together.

An additional lesson concerned the importance of linguistic accessibility. In several replication countries, reaching relevant stakeholders required moving beyond English-language communication and ensuring that activities could take place in national languages. This consideration extended throughout the entire methodology, from stakeholder mapping and needs assessment to event promotion, facilitation, and follow-up. The use of translated materials, locally adapted communication strategies and interpretation during workshops proved essential for engaging a broader and more diverse audience (including local authorities, citizen groups and practitioners who may not normally participate in European-level discussions), and ensuring that discussions were rooted in local contexts rather than limited to actors already engaged in European-level debates.

Diversity of actors as both an opportunity and a challenge

Another important lesson emerging from the capacity building activities of the Life COMET project relates to the diversity of stakeholders involved in the development of energy communities. Across the replication countries, discussions brought together actors with different priorities, expectations and perspectives regarding governance models, financing approaches, public participation, regulatory frameworks, etc. This diversity reflects the broad range of actors that can contribute to the growth of community energy ecosystems. At the same time, the activities highlighted that diversity alone does not automatically translate into effective collaboration. As detailed in previous deliverables of the Life COMET project⁶, building a strong coalition requires more than bringing stakeholders together; it requires identifying shared objectives, common priorities, and a collective vision for the development of energy communities. In several cases, stakeholders approached the topic from different starting points and with different expectations regarding the forms of support that should be prioritised.

The Bulgarian experience particularly illustrated both the opportunities and challenges associated with coalition building. While interest in strengthening the community energy ecosystem was

⁶ The National Community Energy Coalitions report and the National Community Energy Coalitions Roadmaps give more insights into the 7 national coalitions of the Life COMET project partner countries. <https://lifecomet.rescoop.eu/resources>

evident, discussions also revealed different perspectives between civil society organisations, local authorities, and other stakeholders. The process therefore highlighted the importance of facilitating dialogue and trust-building before more structured forms of cooperation can emerge.

A different dynamic emerged in the Baltic countries. Given the small size of the national ecosystems and the still limited number of actors actively engaged in community energy development, discussions increasingly focused on the potential for cooperation beyond national borders. The capacity building activities helped identify opportunities for stronger collaboration between Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonian stakeholders, opening the possibility of a future pan-Baltic exchange platform. While this cooperation remains at a very early stage, it demonstrates how replication activities can help actors identify innovative forms of collaboration adapted to their specific context.

The Czech Republic offered yet another perspective. The presence of an established national coalition and well-developed stakeholder network facilitated outreach and engagement. At the same time, the experience suggests that where robust ecosystems already exist, greater emphasis should be placed on co-designing activities with local actors from a much earlier stage, allowing them to shape priorities, directly contribute expertise and take ownership of the process.

Overall, the experience across the replication countries suggests that the maturity of local energy community networks significantly influences both the objectives and implementation of capacity building activities. Emerging contexts often require greater investment in awareness raising, stakeholder mobilisation and network building, while more mature ecosystems benefit from stronger co-design processes and closer alignment with locally identified priorities. Across all contexts, however, long-term ecosystem development depends not only on the diversity of actors involved, but also on their ability to develop shared objectives, align expectations, and build a common vision capable of sustaining cooperation over time.

Maintaining momentum beyond Life COMET events

The capacity building programme thus also underscored the importance of viewing workshops and webinars as steps within a broader engagement process rather than standalone activities. In several cases, in-person workshops were particularly valuable not as concluding events (as was originally planned in the project) but as intermediate milestones that helped consolidate relationships, identify potential cooperation, and define next steps.

The events generated interest, facilitated networking, and aimed to increase participants' understanding of community energy opportunities. However, their long-term impact will depend on the ability of local actors to maintain engagement, continue collaboration and translate discussions into concrete initiatives. A key role that can be undertaken by national coalitions of energy communities. This is particularly important in the context of Central and Eastern European countries where the level of trust and engagement with energy communities is historically lower (as opposed to Western European countries where the acceptance of community energy models is much higher) and requires continuous efforts. As stated by Ervin Kaçiu, in the report *Energy Communities and the Legacy of Post-Socialism*⁷, *"the key aspect that must be taken into account in these contexts, emphasising the lack of trust, is that one cannot expect initiatives to emerge spontaneously from the people themselves; they must be encouraged and organised by other entities that are interested in the green economy and democracy."* This highlights the importance

⁷ Bartłomiej Kupiec, Julia Potrzebowska, Ervin Kaçiu, *Energy Communities and the Legacy of Post-Socialism* (2024), by CoopTech Hub and Heinrich Böll Stiftung Warsaw, <https://pl.boell.org/en/2024/12/19/energy-communities-and-legacy-post-socialism>

of follow-up actions, continued funding support mechanisms, and opportunities for peer exchange beyond the duration of individual events. In several cases, as is the case in Bulgaria, the Western Balkans, and the Baltic countries, such next steps are already underway, supported by a simple but important practical approach: integrating the elaboration of next tangible steps directly into the programme of the capacity building workshops.

Despite the structural, regulatory, and political challenges that remain in many replication countries, the capacity building activities revealed encouraging signs of growing interest in community energy. The level of participation, the diversity of stakeholders represented, the commitment of local partners and the new connections established during the events all suggest that foundations for future development are being laid. Participants were not only interested in learning about community energy but also demonstrated a willingness to engage, collaborate, and explore concrete opportunities for action.

While these developments are encouraging, the capacity building activities also confirmed that important barriers to the development of energy communities remain across many replication countries. Regulatory uncertainty, limited support frameworks, and the lack of dedicated financing mechanisms continue to constrain the emergence and scaling-up of community energy initiatives. At the same time, the experience of Life COMET suggests that targeted support remains particularly important in emerging contexts, where many stakeholders would not otherwise have the opportunity to connect, exchange experiences, and explore common approaches. The activities demonstrated that creating these opportunities for dialogue and cooperation can help lay the foundations for more structured and lasting forms of collaboration.

In this context, energy community networks and coalitions have a crucial role to play in supporting new initiatives, sharing knowledge and advocating for more enabling framework conditions. Strengthening such structures across Europe remains an important step to accelerate the development of energy communities and ensure their full contribution to the energy transition.



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