



Mr. Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal

Ms. Kadri Simson, European Commissioner for Energy

Open letter from the Community Power Coalition

We are writing to you as Europe starts to emerge from the crisis of COVID-19, as a coalition of cooperative organisations, cities, civil society and industry organisations who work together to increase citizen and community ownership of renewable energy.

As you and the rest of the College work to revive our economies ravaged by COVID-19, we call on you to implement an economic recovery that ensures our society and our local communities are more resilient and fairer in the long term. This should also be reflected in upcoming policy documents such as the Climate Pact.

We welcome that the European Green Deal goal to cut net EU greenhouse gas emissions to zero is expected to guide the bloc's economic recovery. However, if EU leaders are serious about spending every available euro to protect the lives and livelihoods of Europeans, as President Von Der Leyen has said, then such actions must protect livelihoods now and in the future. This means ensuring an energy transition that achieves real net zero much earlier and in line with science, and climate-proofing all of the EU's investments, to protect us from the worst effects of climate change.

The COVID-19 crisis has brought a renewed focus on local economic resilience. Indeed, community energy initiatives are crucial to speeding up the energy transition and delivering increased local resilience.

- **Community energy projects generate 2-8 times more local revenue** than a project carried out by an external actor (as exemplified in [solar PV](#) and [wind power](#) projects), and [encourage energy saving behaviour](#).
- **Communities can be key in boosting the European innovation sector.** Thanks to their local nature, communities are more inclined to stimulate the emergence of a photovoltaic industry in Europe, as they are [more likely to support](#) a local or regional manufacturer of solar panels, applying high social and environmental standards.
- **Energy communities are a means to create local energy markets**, in which consumers can buy energy at a stable and fair price.
- **Energy communities offer a holistic approach to the energy transition**, covering activities such as renewable energy production and supply, building renovation, flexibility services, energy efficiency, clean mobility, energy literacy and more.
- **Energy communities promote solidarity** due to their inclusive character and their tendency to reinvest a portion of their revenues back into their own community. Many communities also contribute to ending energy poverty locally.

Cities & citizens are committed to drive a resilient recovery in their communities. For example (many more initiatives exist throughout Europe):

- The City of Amsterdam (NL) decided to make use of the “Doughnut-Model” they have worked on over the last 5 years to guide their recovering measures.
- The City of Ghent (BE) has installed a “Relaunch taskforce” to develop short- and long-term measures focusing on the most vulnerable, and has mobilized 25 million euro to overcome the corona crisis.
- French energy cooperative association [Énergie Partagée](#) launched a massive database of resources and initiatives to support communities throughout the pandemic.
- The energy cooperative in [Crevillent](#) (ES) released 800 000 EUR towards a “React Plan” to help families, and the cooperatives [Som Energia](#) (ES) and Enercoop (FR) postponed billing and continued to provide electricity to clients who couldn’t pay their bills during the lockdown.

To leverage the power of cities and citizen communities, we ask you to

- Promote and finance community led local development as a means to support a just recovery
- Provide specific support to citizen-led renovations under the Renovation Wave
- Provide easier access to EFSI and EIB investment tools for energy communities
- Earmark financing for renewable energy communities in the renewable energy financing mechanism for EU-wide projects
- Set up a designated financing facility (e.g. under H2020) and a secretariat for energy communities
- Make all government bailouts of industry conditional on being used to immediately start the transition to decarbonise their operations, and include a trajectory to reach climate neutrality by 2030
- Support feed-in tariffs and other financing schemes for energy communities in economic stimulus packages
- Ensure member states have the support and resources they need to transpose the Renewable Energy Directive and the Electricity Market Directive in a timely and adequate manner.

We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss these demands with you in the coming months, and to share our experience of the opportunities and the challenges facing local and community energy as we emerge from this crisis.

We look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely,

Friends of the Earth Europe (EU-wide)
European Renewable Energies Federation (EU-wide)
ICLEI European Secretariat (EU-wide)
APERe (Belgium)
Enercoop (France)
World Future Council (Germany)
NSC - Friends of the Earth Hungary
Som Energia (Spain)

Energy Cities (EU-wide)
REScoop.eu (EU-wide)
INFORSE-Europe (EU-wide)
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