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LOCAL ENERGY COMMUNITIES

Exploring Research, Technologies and Regulations for Their Implementation in Europe

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Social acceptance

The development of Local Energy Communities (LEC) will also require the acceptance from the people participating or expected to participate to it.

Many questions come from citizens:

- Trust in technology => why should I change a system which is working?
- Security of supply
- Legal issues
- What is the organisation of LEC?
- What is the involvement needed?
- Would it be possible to make money out of LEC?
- How to ensure commitments from the participants and actors?
- Transparency on the electricity cost

To answer all these challenges, one thing was highlighted: openness.

Indeed, information are key for the actors. This will ensure the dialogue and then the involvement of citizens. There is a need to identify clear leaders to lead the LEC. All the participants should be in a comfortable situation and participate to energy transition in an actionable way. The structure of LECs should be as clear as possible and the citizen could participate at different level. However, as stated in the regulation roundtable, they should have the freedom to opt out. LEC is a collaborative instrument and not a mandatory one. Transparency and a democratic approach are important for the development of LECs. This will be the way to engage citizens.

Conclusion from moderators:

The participation in the energy community should be guided by a sense of grounding of the decision process in the will of the citizens (bottom up approach). In order to facilitate the acceptance of LEC among the population, more information about the benefit of this new kind of cooperation should be presented. The goal of the energy community is to provide a governance tool to facilitate the participation of citizens and the dialogue with incumbents and institutional partners. In this sense the fairness and balance of the governance is crucial. In this sense, providing a transparent, open and autonomous framework is crucial to motivate the interest and participation of the citizens in any form of energy community (citizen or renewable). The transparency of the LEC organization and the possibility to participate at different level, with different role and benefit, should increase the citizens' involvement.