

# BÜRGERENERGIE HEUTE UND MORGEN

## Citizen Energy – today and tomorrow

A report on the decentralised, prosumer-driven energy system of the year 2030

Local, citizen-owned production of renewable energy has significant potential to play an essential role in the energy system by 2030. If given a positive regulatory framework, a decentral energy system dominated by prosumers (i.e. communities, cooperatives and small local businesses that produce and consume their own renewable energy) is likely to shape the energy system, a report by the German Bündnis Bürgerenergie (Association for Citizen Energy) shows.

The report, entitled “**Citizen Energy – today and tomorrow**”, published in April 2017 and so far only available in German (<https://www.buendnis-buergerenergie.de/bericht-buergerenergie-heute-und-morgen/>), presents a clear vision of a decentralised, citizen-owned energy sector as the backbone of the local energy supply. Citizen Energy projects of today, by developing into communities that generate and consume energy at the same time, have the potential to revolutionize the energy system. At the same time, the report shows how citizen-owned energy projects can develop their activities to suit the needs of a prosumer-oriented energy system. Furthermore, the report presents a roadmap for how to put in place policy and regulations to fully realize the potential of a decentralised energy system.

“We are miles away from a level playing field for collective prosumers in the energy sector”, says René Mono, one of the authors of the report and director at Bündnis Bürgerenergie. “Citizens operating a collective pv project are put at a **significant disadvantage** compared to the big energy suppliers and system operators. This needs to change.”

The political roadmap presented in the report centers on a “**right to prosume**”, which includes a right to generate, to store, to sell and to buy energy for collective prosumers. This “right to prosume” also comprises a demand to end the discrimination that collective prosumers face in Germany, for example in apartment buildings. The relevant political decisions to enable prosumers to act collectively include a clear-cut conception of small energy and heat grids operated by prosumer communities.

While politics are crucial for prosumer communities to thrive, internal developments in the prosumer community are another focus of the report. In a series of workshops with citizen energy experts, Bündnis Bürgerenergie has carved out **four key factors of the internal development** in citizen energy projects that will enable them to become successful prosumer communities. First, prosumer communities should strive to ensure a high degree of **participation** of community members in their respective local projects. Second, energy projects should aim at providing **economic advantages of local energy supply**, making the business case for local energy and thus convincing potential future

prosumers to rely on local, citizen-owned energy solutions instead of buying transmission grid-delivered fossil energy. Third, by boosting the **usability** of their energy projects and the digital technologies to operate the local energy trade, energy projects can gain more members and cut operating costs. Fourth, by further developing **competences and know-how** among their members, energy projects can improve their ability to deal with complex technologies and trade structures in the energy business.

The report, which includes a comment by EU parliamentarian and Citizen Energy Pioneer, Claude Turmes, also puts an emphasis on the **European dimension**. Citizen Energy, it argues, can dramatically and positively change the energy landscape everywhere in Europe. Not only does it have the potential to bring about a real energy transition that effectively tackles climate change. It also has the potential to create a massive amount of jobs in a sector that is on the rise, significantly strengthening local economies, and contributing to alleviate energy poverty. It can encourage local community-led education to produce renewable energy and reduce energy demand. With prosumers at the center of our energy system, European energy policy can take a holistic approach to network development, boosting social acceptance of the energy transition by keeping the expansion of the grid at a minimum. And most importantly, with collective prosuming citizens all over Europe can take back democratic control of the energy sector and actively shape decisions that matter significantly to their daily lives.

For further information please contact

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