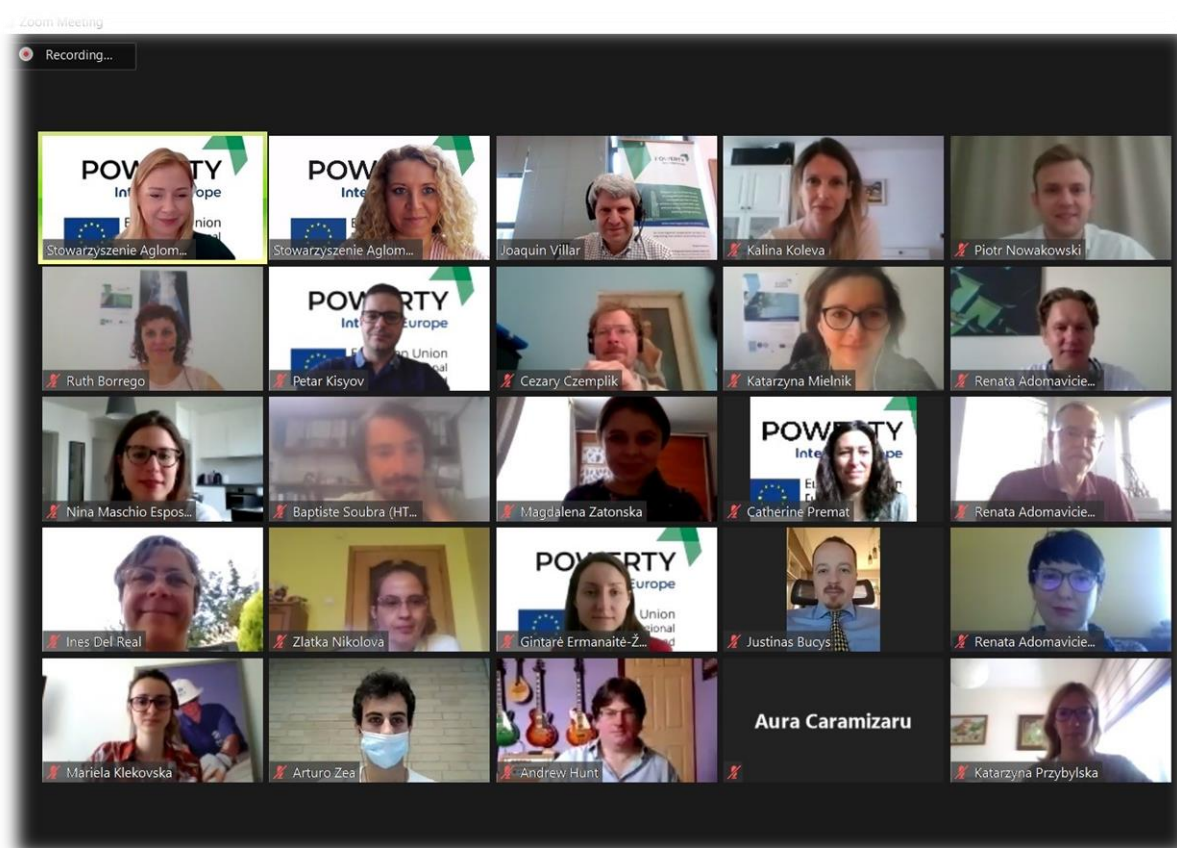


PRESS RELEASE

Third Interregional thematic seminar of the POWERTY project on Empowering Citizens and Local Authorities

17th and 18th June 2021, on line



The III Interregional Thematic Seminar of the POWERTY project has passed [June 17-18, 2021](#) we were focused on learn **how to involve local authorities and citizens in raising awareness of the problem of energy poverty**. In addition, we discover examples of how close cooperation of local governments and citizens affects the benefit of all residents. The event was financed by the Interreg Europe programme and the Agglomeration Opole Trust (AOT) was the host on the ZOOM platform. We were also able to learn how with **energy communities** issues deal our project partners and their regional experts, gathered up to **125 participants** registered for the event.

17th June 2021 – Day 1:

Social Innovation for the Energy transition to tackle energy poverty

After familiarizing the participants with the rules of the meeting, the floor was given to the AOT Director, Mr. Piotr Dacewicz, who told about our association and why the POWERTY Project is important to us. Mr. Joaquin Villar Rodriguez from the Andalusian Energy Agency (AEA) then spoke about the POWERTY project and the challenges Europe faces in reaching European decarbonisation targets.

After the welcome part, the *first session on Social Innovation for Energy Transition* began.

Mr. Piotr Nowakowski from the National Energy Conservation Agency (KAPE) presented "Development of civic energy in Poland". We could find out about PV market in Poland, what is the situation of individual prosumers in Poland and energy communities. Due to the imposed deadlines and the requirements of the European Green Deal, there are many changes in Polish law. We could learn about what the Polish government is preparing in the coming months and about the [COME-RES project](#) - Community energy for the uptake of renewables in the electricity sector.

The next lecturer - Ms. Aura Caramizaru from the European Commission presenting the "European overview of energy communities". Development of energy communities is a process that began in the 70s of the last century. What is the relationship between energy communities and energy poverty? What energy communities in EU legislation are? We were able to find answers to these and other questions during the presentation.

The *second session on Focus on local authorities* began with the presentation of the Master Plan for Social Innovation of the Seville City Council by Mr. David Pino who emphasized that energy communities should not only be an element of energy savings or even something as good as tackling energy poverty but they should become a real network of local ecosystem that is local innovation ecosystems for local transformation and sustainability. Also he focused on the figure of cooperative as a good figure for the energy communities.

In the next lecture we could listen to examples of using new mechanisms of support for housing policy and thermomodernization in the local government policy by M.Ar. Cezary Czemplik and Ms. Katarzyna Przybylska from the Polish Natural Building Association. From the presentation we found out about Social rental agency (SRA) especially the model and Habitat Poland's program which includes new solutions for Habitat Poland and how to use SRA in housing, social and energy efficiency policies. Moreover, we could also find out about natural, economy communal building system and internal, external economic natural insulation.

The *final session of the day focused on demonstrating citizen participation* in energy transition efforts. The first lecture was presented by Mr. Dariusz Grabowiecki from the Provincial Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management in Opole. He presented the topic "Nationwide System of Advisory Support for the Public Sector, Housing and Enterprises in the field of energy efficiency and RES". We could find out about

what are the goals and main activities of the project. One of the main activities is the energy consulting project which includes: Building and managing a nationwide network of advisory support, consulting services, preparation and implementation of training for municipal energy advisors, construction and operation of the IT system, information, promotion, research on the effectiveness of information and promotion activities, monitoring and control of the achievement of the project objectives.

Another presentation on “Community Bioenergy and fostering new links and partnerships” was given by Ms. Magdalena Zatonka. She presented [BECoop project](#) as an idea which focus on mobilizing citizens around bioenergy initiatives, increasing knowledge and acceptance of bioenergy, especially for domestic heating purposes.

Then Mr. Andrew Hunt, partner of the [COALESCCE project](#) (Interreg Europe) spoke about “Community owned and led energy for security, climate change and employment”. The project is focus on citizen energy to address energy security, carbon emissions reduction targets and building the local economy. In other words COALESCCE was made to increase the capacity for community based approaches to local renewable energy provision across Europe in order to reduce carbon emissions, increase energy security and tackle fuel poverty whilst driving ‘Green Growth’. The good practices as bio-briquettes, bioenergy villages, apartment block retrofit met with a very positive reception by the participants of the seminar.

The program also featured Ms. Marine Cornelies of Next Energy Consumer presenting “the Experience of being an [Ambassador of the European Climate Pact](#)”. The European Climate Pact Ambassadors inform, inspire and support climate action in their communities and networks. She emphasized that protecting the health and wellbeing of citizens is equally important as respecting the climate and the environment.

Mr. Jose Miguel Granados of COOPERASE who presented citizen participation in the Monachil energy community in Andalusia (Spain) and how it works.

At the end of the first day of the seminar, the POWERTY project coordinator from Poland, Ms. Anna Grodzińska (AOT), conducted a **networking section** using online surveys to check the participants' satisfaction with the seminar and get to know each other better.

18th June 2021 – Day 2: Empowering citizens and local authorities – Good practices

The second day was devoted to good practices at POWERTY project partners in the topic Empowerment.

Ms. Elena Vatrachka, from Schneider Electric Bulgaria, presented the good practice about **Sustainable reduction of energy consumption of low-income households through energy advice** ([access to the GP](#)). The purpose is to empower all to make the most of the energy and resources, bridging progress and sustainability for all citizens in Bulgaria. Main impact is on engaging communities (volunteer; partner, employees, citizen), raising awareness (training & energy advising), reaching out to the most vulnerable and supporting positive impact on climate.

Mr. Jakub Mickiewicz, from Lokalna TV, and Ms. Anna Grodzińska (AOT), explained the good practice about **How to make a vlog or interview?**. Thanks to the presentation of this good practice, we were able to find out how to easily run a vlog with a mobile phone and a tripod at our disposal. What mistakes should not be made and how to choose the topics of the talks in order to avoid energy poverty. The host shows how using the free media (YouTube Channel) with a small financial outlay to reach people who are energy poor. Mr. Mickiewicz talked about how to record films in unprofessional conditions.

The broadcasting thematic vlog "POWER and YOU" (short films) was created by AOT for the inhabitants of the Opole Agglomeration (inhabitants of 21 communes) to fulfill an educational and informative function about energy giving information about obtaining subsidies for the exchange of heat sources, changes in the anti-smog policy, new legal regulation, renewable energies and so on. The Vlog is available in YouTube so the episodes can be watched or listened to in a convenient place and time.

Ms. Gintarė Ermanaitė-Žalė (VIPA) defined the good practice **Change of legislation to foster building renovation program which include vulnerable groups** ([access to the GP](#)). Presents how the support program has been implemented and what problems it encounters. It also shows what benefits can be obtained and why it is so important in Lithuania. Additional benefits to foster program are: Providing interest rate subsidies (result based), providing additional grants to final beneficiaries, including additional grants for RES installment (result based, funded from Climate change fund and state budget), covering monthly instalments for low income households (covered from municipalities funds) and, providing technical support financing and providing long term financing.

Ms. Noémie Zambeaux (AURA-EE) presented the **Autonomous Building for Citizens (ABC) demonstration** good practice ([access to the GP](#)) consisting on the first autonomous building in Grenoble (France) in a new innovating district next to international companies (CEA, Schneider etc.). The residence is composed of 62 social housing owned by Grenoble Habitat, a local public company, social landlord, builder and real estate developer. Designed and built by research and development teams of Bouygues Construction. A sustained implementation by local authorities and government.

Ms. Ruth Borrego Andrade (AEA) presented the good practice **An installing solar panels insertion company whose employees are people at risk of exclusion by ECOOO** ([access to the GP](#)). She shows who is involved in this initiative and highlight the results of this good practice: The creation of the first company (HAZ SOLAR) of photovoltaic installers coming from insertion companies compounds by people on risk of exclusion, hiring of 6 people in vulnerable situations with a view to their professional training and their insertion in the ordinary market, from 6 photovoltaic installations in single family homes to 46 installations, the total installed power amounts to 100kW (80% for residential use) and high degree of customer satisfaction both in terms of the quality of the installation and for the human treatment of the team members.

Mr. Bosco Valero, MUTI Association, shows the [Alumbra Energy community and its project “Energy at the school” awarded by the Greenpeace Hackathon \(access to the GP\)](#). We could find out how the school community is able to achieve energy savings that they are invested in the school itself. Children can also learn how to save energy in their own home during the lessons training in the environment and responsible energy consumption, collective self-consumption, vulnerability and the right to energy for families from school and gradually from all over Arroyomolinos de Leon (Huelva, Spain).

Next, Ms. Eleni Kanellou, coordinator of the [POWERPOOR project](#) (Horizon 2020), spoke about “Empowering Energy Poor Citizens through Joint Energy Initiatives”. POWERPOOR leads the way in:

- Supporting - energy poor citizens to implement energy efficiency interventions and participate in joint energy initiatives, through the development of POWERPOOR support programmes and tools, to alleviate energy poverty.
- Facilitating - citizens’ behaviour change towards energy use and uptake of energy efficiency measures through experience and knowledge sharing, as well as through joint energy initiatives and citizen engagement campaigns targeting groups of consumers in energy poor communities.
- Promoting - energy community projects / alternative financing schemes and assisting citizens to pursue funding opportunities (e.g., energy communities, energy cooperatives & crowdfunding).

The last item on the agenda was presented by a video about the [study visit to Opole Province \(Poland\)](#), including the



presentation of the wind panel, as the winner project of the [Warm up your business competition](#), also the design of a microhouses or modular houses 100% RES and finally the most modern facility using renewable energy sources in the Scientific and Research Institute - Father Sebastian Kneipp. The Rehabilitation and Leisure Complex using PV solar. More information in the [report of the study visit](#).

Ms. Ruth Borrego Andrade (AEA), as a leader partner of the POWERTY project, closed the seminar thanking the assistance and all the information exchanged. She remarked the importance of the energy communities to tackle energy poverty and also the active role of the citizens and the local authorities to get renewable energy for vulnerable groups.

All presentations and videos are available on the POWERTY website (section [LIBRARY](#)).