



PRESS RELEASE – Survey shows the level of social acceptance of energy communities in Europe

Less harmful emissions and lower cost of energy, these are the main benefits of renewables perceived by European citizens as emerged from the RENAISSANCE survey on renewable energies and community-based solutions.

The target of European renewable energy directive 2018/2001 (RED II) is to have a 32% of energy consumption from renewables by 2030. Member States have to transpose the directive “Clean Energy for all” by 30 June 2021

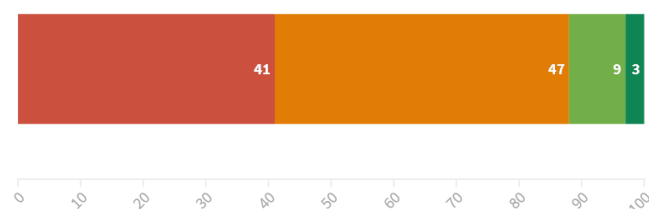
In this scenario, the RENAISSANCE survey photographs European citizens’ social acceptance of energy transition towards renewables: new business models could be easily implemented if a better two-way communication about policies would be ensured between institutions and citizens. Potential prosumers require high levels of transparency on costs of energy production systems and reassurance on health and safety implications.

Brussels, 22 February 2021

We are all aware that the way the energy we use is generated has a strong impact on the environment. Citizens are convinced that it is mainly the responsibility of policy makers and energy producers to promote the *energy revolution* promoting and investing in renewables. Most people know there are incentives and measures for the transition of consumers towards “green” energies, but they consider them largely insufficient. About the possibility of installing small systems in their own properties or accepting small plants for the production and consumption of local renewable energy, benefits to the environment and wallet are crystal clear, but maintenance costs scare away.

32. In your opinion, the amount of incentives or facilitating measures supporting consumers' transitions to renewable energy sources in your country are:

■ A little ■ A moderate amount ■ A lot ■ A great deal



Source: www.renaissance-h2020.eu • [Q32]

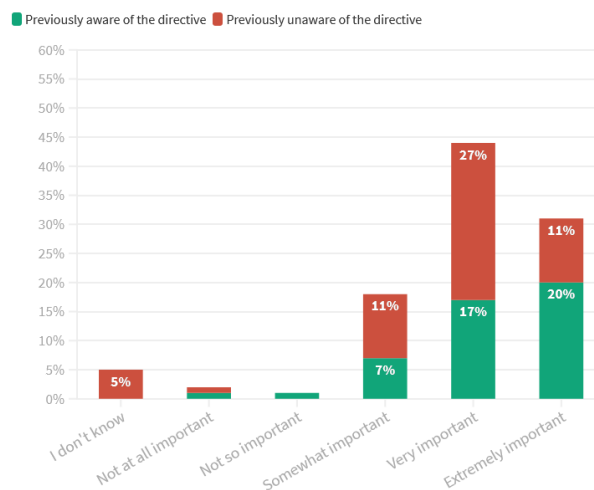
Figure 1 - <https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/5241901/>

Here some of the key issues investigated by the [RENAISSANCE survey](#): what is the level of awareness of European citizens about energy production and its impact on the environment and society? Are people prepared to accept a change in energy production and distribution patterns, including becoming *prosumers* (energy producers and consumers) themselves? What are their main drivers, what are they scared about, how do they envision an ideal energy future? The survey team contacted over 200 people in Europe and beyond and it part of the stakeholder engagement strategy of the Horizon 2020 project [RENAISSANCE](#).

With the renewable energy directive 2018/2001 (RED II), Europe aims at keeping the EU a global leader in renewables and contributes to meet its emissions reduction commitments under the Paris Agreement (renewables target of 32% of total energy consumption by 2030). The directive provides a clear definition of Renewable Energy Communities (RECs) and Local Energy Communities (LECs), introduces governance models and finally opens to the possibility of sharing and trading energy in a more democratic energy market. The aim of RENAISSANCE is to support and promote RECs by identifying the most effective solutions and business models depending on the specific environmental and socio-economic context. The survey thus investigates European citizens' awareness and expectations concerning emerging business models in the energy market: Local and Renewable Energy Communities, Peer-to-Peer networks and Virtual Power plants.

Despite the pandemic, the survey reveals how climate change remains the main reason of concern for European citizens. «The figures show that the complex network of relationships between human activities and natural events is often not well understood, we need to ensure consistent and comprehensible scientific and environmental information – said Rebecca Huetting, Sustainable Energy and Mobility researcher at [Deep Blue](#), member of the RENAISSANCE Consortium – the survey also suggests a lack of communication between citizens, European regulators and national or regional authorities concerning renewable energies. In May 2020 only 45.9% of the respondents knew about the 2019 Directive "[CLEAN ENERGY FOR ALL EUROPEANS](#)" promoting the implementation of distributed renewable energy production systems; only 54% were aware of existing incentives for green energies, but few knew any of these measures in detail. It is deemed necessary to strengthen communication with citizens using both institutional and more informal channels, while ensuring strict correspondence with facts and real opportunities for change».

25. In your opinion, how important are such directives for building effective strategies towards a sustainable energy system?



Source: www.renaissance-h2020.eu • [ID06 - Q25]

Figure 2 - <https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/5339430/>

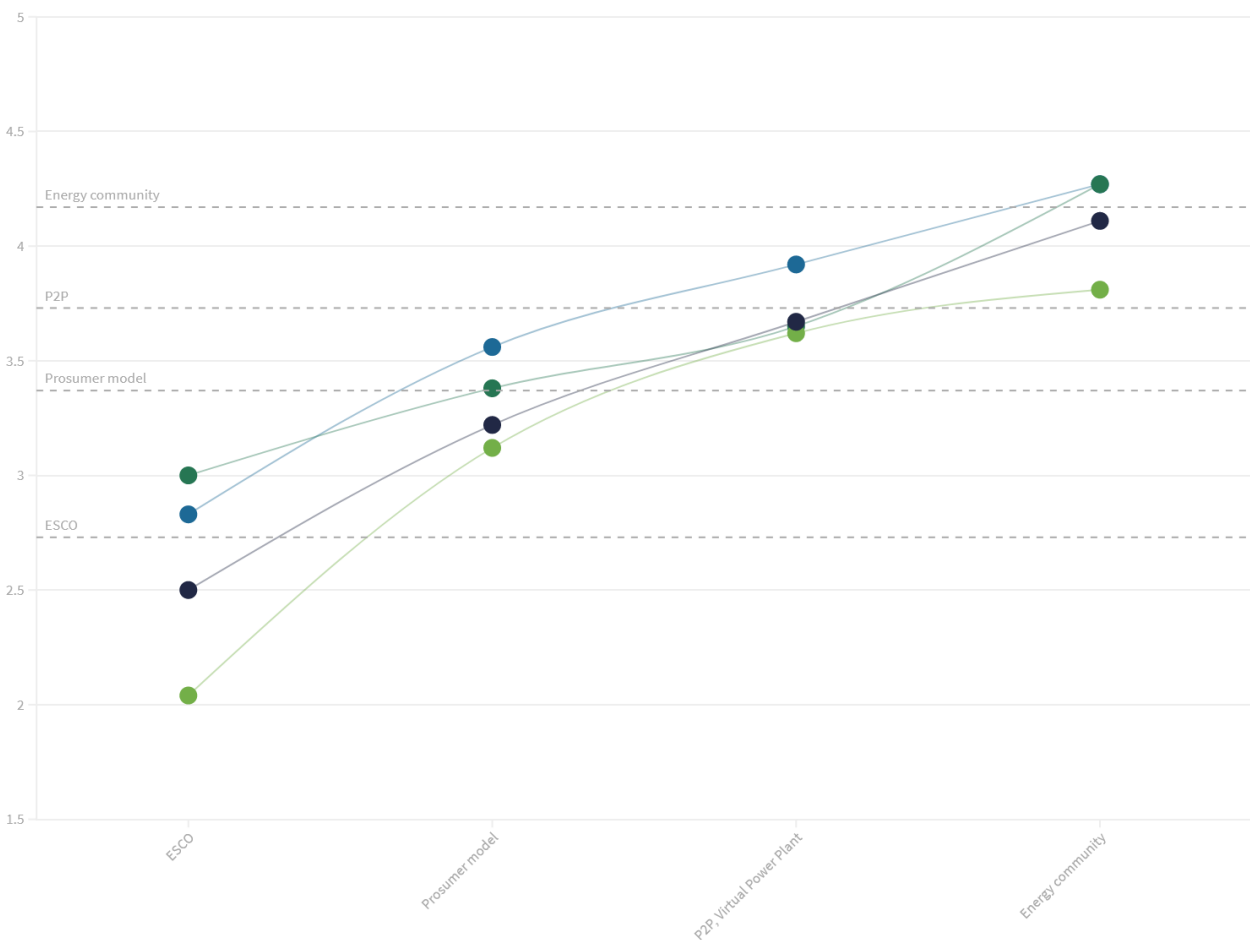


Effective communication is especially relevant: 80% of the sample admits to be likely to seek advice when switching to a renewable energy supplier, yet it is unclear which are reliable sources of information. People mainly trust friends and colleagues rather than dive into long-reading of academic journals, regulations or institutional agencies' bulletins. Television, radio and newspapers are considered the least trustworthy.

«I believe what emerged on business models in the new energy market is also very interesting - added Alessandra Tedeschi, head of Research & Development at Deep Blue - the current model, that is consumers buying from large energy company operators, is the least preferred. The ideal solution, especially among the youngest, is instead the scenario of local renewable energy communities: self-produced energy serves to meet the needs of its members; the surplus is stored, sold to other consumers or fed into the public network and the profits divided among the members of the community. Since technologies such as blockchain, DLT and smart-contracts are now mature, they can facilitate end-users' adoption. In addition, the RENAISSANCE approach suggests more engagement of local communities and stakeholders in the decision making processes. Surveys such as this one can provide an initial guidance to fill communication and participation gaps. The times for an energy transition seem now ripe, it is up to policy makers and regulators to accelerate the pace».

Q26.28.28.29. Evaluate four potential scenarios for the future energy market. In all scenarios exclusively local renewable energy is produced, stored or traded. Considering your local context, please star-rank them from the most desirable condition to the least.

■ Youngers living in low density populated areas ■ Youngers living in high density populated areas ■ Elders living in low density populated areas ■ Elders living in high density populated areas



Source: www.renaissance-h2020.eu • [ID8 - Q26.27.28.29]

Figure 3 - <https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/5241887/>



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