TIME FOR A CHANGE

Role of environmental NGOs and regional cooperation in South East Europe transition towards sustanaible energy sectors

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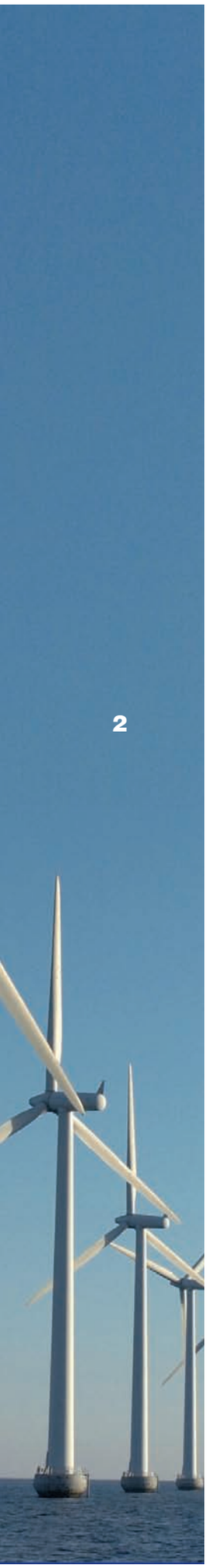
Role of environmental NGOs and regional cooperation in South East Europe transition towards sustainable energy sectors

Zagreb, December 2011.



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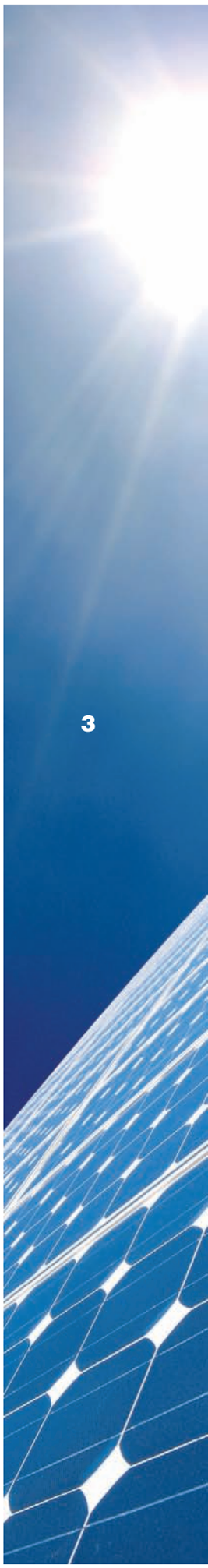
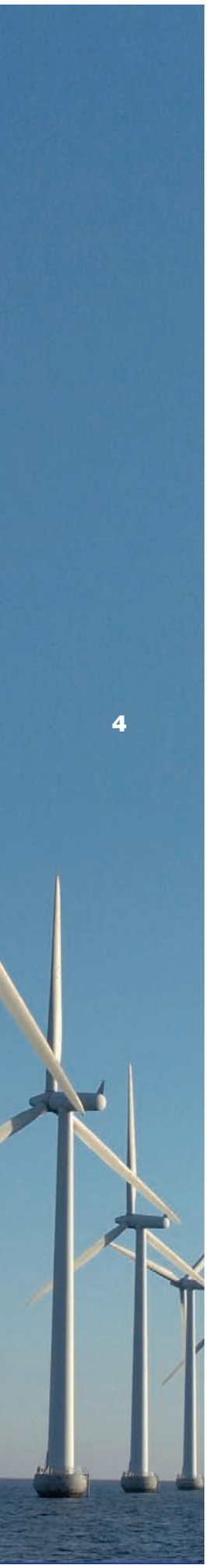


CONTENTS



INTRODUCTION

The winter 2008/09 collapse in natural gas supplies and the new EU climate and energy legislation package, with its goal of achieving a 20 percent increase in share of renewable and energy efficiency by 2020, have brought new urgency to the need for action in the power and transport sectors in South East Europe (SEE). There is a great need for determined and comprehensive policies and implementation measures for energy efficiency and the substitution of fossil fuels with local renewable energy resources in the region.

Unfortunately national governments are still focused on the construction of new generation capacity in traditional technologies – mainly coal and large hydropower, which both have serious environmental impacts. Local governments generally lack capacity to develop their own energy plans or policies, and most civil sector stakeholders (unions, farmers' associations, youth groups) see energy as an issue outside of their field of interest. Environmental CSOs in the region have until now been the most active in promoting energy efficiency and greater use of renewables, but, due to lack of capacity, often in a sporadic, uncoordinated and reactive manner.

SEE Network on Energy and transport (SEENET, a network of environmental NGOs for sustainable energy and transport in SEE), although founded by primarily environmental NGOs, seeks to build alliances with other civil society stakeholders in order to achieve stronger results. There is a great need for more active and strategic involvement of environmental and other CSOs in the promotion and development of policies for greater energy efficiency and use of renewable energy, both in the power and transport sectors, and both regionally and on the national level in SEE countries.

The mission of the network is to provide a platform for co-operation on the regional level and to ensure the active participation of environmental NGOs in regional and international processes relevant to the energy and transport sectors. Primarily through advocacy activities, our members will work on speeding up a transformation towards environmentally and socially sustainable energy and transport sectors in our communities and countries as well as in the region.

This brochure is a part of the project »Networking and Capacity Building of Environmental NGOs to Increase Energy Efficiency and Renewable Sources of Energy in Western Balkans« and it is based on discussions held within two regional conferences and other meetings organised by SEENET, and its aim is to introduce positions of the network to the relevant institutions, and to provide other CSOs in the region with basic information about potential for a positive developments in our energy sector. Brochure is primarily focused on the energy sectors of the »Western Balkan« countries, thus energy sectors of the countries of SEE region, already in EU, are not covered.

1. VISION AND RECOMENDATIONS TO POLICY MAKERS

SEENET shares a vision of a prosperous South East Europe in which fossil and nuclear fuels – mostly imported – have been phased out before mid-century, and replaced by locally owned and managed renewable energy sources, creating environmentally and socially sustainable energy and transport sectors. Due to the rich local resources – both natural and human – for such a transformation, the region has become a showcase for the transition of these sectors to sustainable ones.

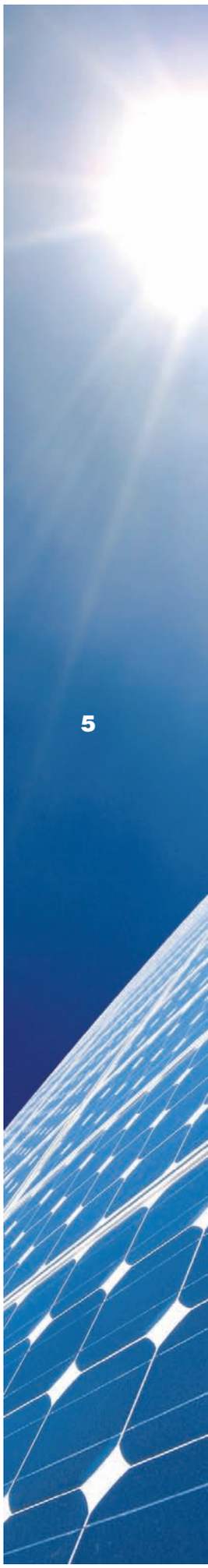
In order to achieve that, we urge the responsible institutions in the region to implement the following recommendations in future strategies, laws and decisions, from the local to the EU level. We demand that the public, civil society and experts must be actively and substantially involved right from the beginning of the related processes.

We call for **100% renewable, decentralized, locally produced and locally owned energy in our region by 2050 at the latest.** We oppose investments in any coal related projects (mining, power plants), the development and utilisation of nuclear energy, and hydropower projects in protected areas, future Natura 2000 areas, or other areas of high biodiversity value, and projects that conflict with the Water Framework Directive.

In order to achieve this, the following are urgently needed:

- removal of administrative and institutional and technical barriers for sustainable energy solutions, and introduction of support policies and financial incentives, especially for small scale energy efficiency, solar thermal and biomass (subject to strict sustainability criteria)
- ensuring strong promotional campaigns in the national media and implementation of large scale training programmes for planning, installing and maintaining sustainable energy solutions
- supporting local municipalities in the development of sustainable energy plans and assessment of local RES potential
- assisting local communities for the implementation of RES projects under their ownership
- development of national sustainability criteria for renewable energy. This is especially important in the case of hydropower and biomass
- revision of current energy plans in order to ensure that all investments in the energy sector are in line with the long term EU energy and climate goals and obligations

We recommend to the Energy Community of SEE to explore the full potentials of the region for energy savings and energy production, in line with resource efficiency and climate goals of EU, and incorporate them in the regional strategy; and ensure that the regional energy strategy does not include goals and plans until 2020 which require investments with irreversible effect (e.g. in new coal capacities).



2. GENERALLY ON ENERGY SECTOR

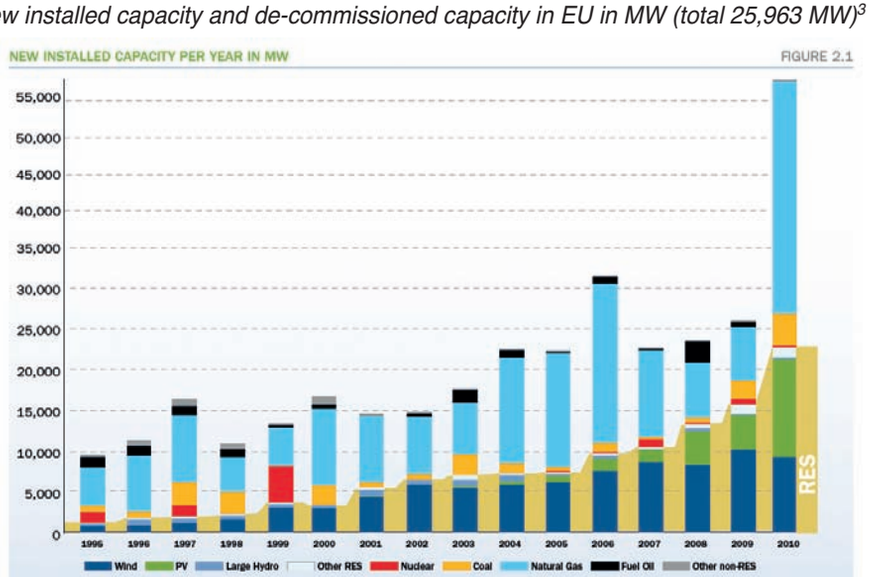
Energy sector is one of the main sources of environmental pollution. On the global level, CO_2 emissions are continuing to rise due to burning of fossil fuels, and the official European statistics shows that due to the local air pollution, the average EU citizen lives 8.6 months shorter.[1] Besides the threat of climate change, there are three more strong incentives to change traditional modes of supply with energy:

– stagnation of world oil production for several years in a row is confirming the predictions of many experts that we have reached the maximum annual oil production, followed by the inevitable decline;
– accelerated development of technologies for renewable energy, as renewable energy sources (mainly sun, wind and biomass), despite the decades of blockade are becoming increasingly more accessible and affordable technologies to use;
– energy efficiency measures or »production of negawatts«[2] More and more countries have an active energy policy measures which saves on expensive energy imports and reduces the negative impacts of the energy sector. Namely, instead of building new power plants of for ex. 200 MW, government tax incentives stimulate citizens, public and business sector while purchasing new appliances (refrigerators, lamps, etc.) to get more energy saving models, and thereby reduce the need for new power plants or to produce »negawatts«.

Despite the slow transition to sustainable energy sector worldwide, some countries are transforming their energy policies in more responsible manner, thus the European Union has energy-climate package of policies and laws that are based on two main goals: achieving the legally required 20% share of renewable energy sources by 2020 and increase of energy efficiency by 20% over the same period, which would make the amount of energy consumed in the future declined, not grown in size.

Such new policies, especially in the European Union, have led to a real technological revolution in the energy sector. Despite the attempts of using media to create images of »renaissance« of building new nuclear power plants or coal power plants, reality in the EU is completely different. For several years now, most of new power plants installed in the EU are using renewable energy sources, primarily wind and sun.

Diagram 1: New installed capacity and de-commissioned capacity in EU in MW (total 25,963 MW)[3]

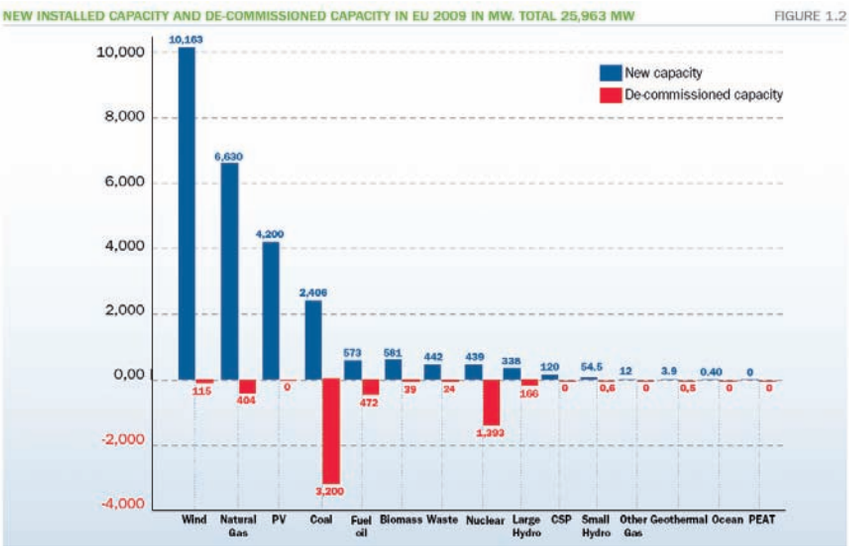


[1] http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs313/en/index.html

[2] **negawatts** – the idea of meeting energy needs by increasing efficiency instead of increasing energy production

[3] Wind in Power, EWEA, 2009

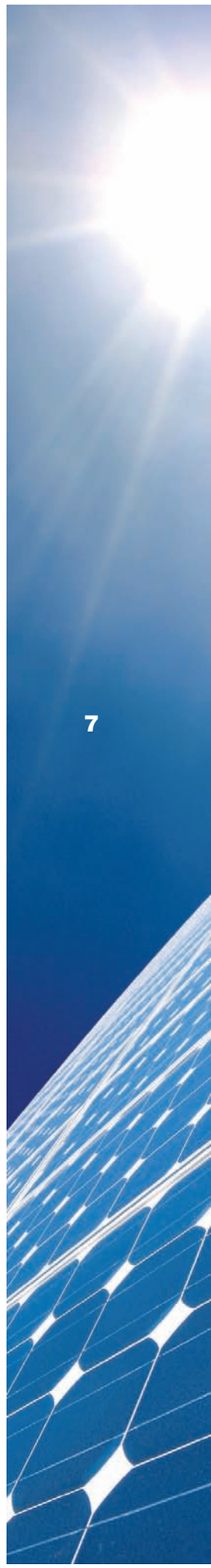
Diagram 2: The trend of participation of power plants on renewable energy sources in the total amount of new power plants in the EU for the period from 1995 to 2010.[4]



If we need to describe energy sectors of the region in a snapshot, inefficient and dirty would be an appropriate phrase. According to the International Energy Agency report »Energy in the Western Balkans« inefficiency of the energy sector is as follows:

> *The Western Balkan region is characterised by relatively high energy intensities: levels range up to 2.5 times higher than the average for OECD Europe (which is 0.15 toe per thousand USD of GDP). This can be attributed to three main factors: the degraded state of the energy infrastructure; high energy losses in transformation, transmission and distribution; and inefficiency in the end-use sector. Based on the ratio of total final energy consumption to total primary energy supply (TFC/TPES), overall efficiency of the energy systems range from lows of 50% (Kosovo) and 58% (Serbia and Montenegro) to a regional high of 80% (Croatia).*
>
> *Croatia has one of the more energy-efficient economies in the Western Balkan region, with an energy intensity of 0.17 toe per thousand USD of GDP (PPP year 2000), which is just over 10% higher than the average for OECD Europe. Nevertheless, Croatia's estimated energy saving potential is significant – in the range of 25% of TPES.*[5]
>
> *Extrapolating such levels across the region would produce savings of around 5 Mtoe, which is equivalent to Serbia's annual imports of crude oil and natural gas combined. Reducing the high network losses (22% of TFC in the region) in the electricity sector is another important source of energy saving. The region could save an additional 5 TWh per year by bringing these losses down to the level of Croatia (the best regional performer), which has losses of 14% of TFC.*

The same luck of the initiative which exists in the field of energy efficiency, we can witness in the field of RES utilization. Investments and programmes for the use of local RES are left to the initiative of citizens and foreign investors. Such policy leads to a dramatic delay in the use of RES and domestic production of equipment in comparison with the EU countries. Even Croatia, probably being a regional leader, lags dramatically behind the comparable EU members.



[4] Wind in Power, EWEA, 2010

[5] 8 WB

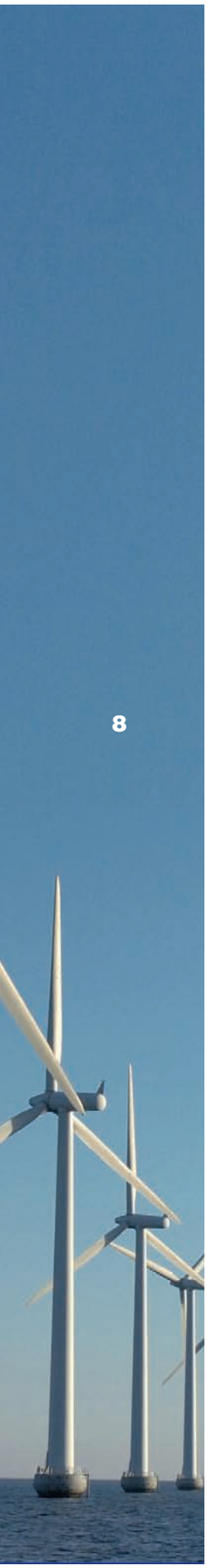


Table 1 presents a comparison of key RES used in Croatia and 5 selected EU countries

Country	Sun (electricity) MW	Sun (heat en. ((ktoe))	Wind (electricity.) MW	Biomass (electricity) MW	Biomass (heat en. (ktoe))
Croatia*	0,109	4,78	69,75	5,59	338,46
Bulgaria	9	6	336	0	734
Czech R.	1650	7	243	113	1759
Greece	184	216	1327	60	1012
Portugal	156	50	4256	647	2179
Slovakia	60	2	5	118	447

**Data for Croatia from 2009*[6]

[6] EIHP for MINELE, Energy in Croatia – Annual Energy Outlook, Zagreb 2009. and EEA – European Environment Agency, Renewable Energy Projections as Published in the NREAP of the EU – 27. 2011

3. COMPARISON OF POLICIES IN THE REGION AND EU

National governments energy policies in the region are still focused on construction of the new generation capacities in traditional technologies – mainly coal and large hydropower, both having serious environmental impacts. Local governments generally lack capacity to develop their own energy plans or policies, therefore energy policies are dominated by the interests of powerful and often monopoly suppliers. National energy bills, both fiscal and external (as well as damages to health and environment) are much larger than in the EU and well hidden from the public.

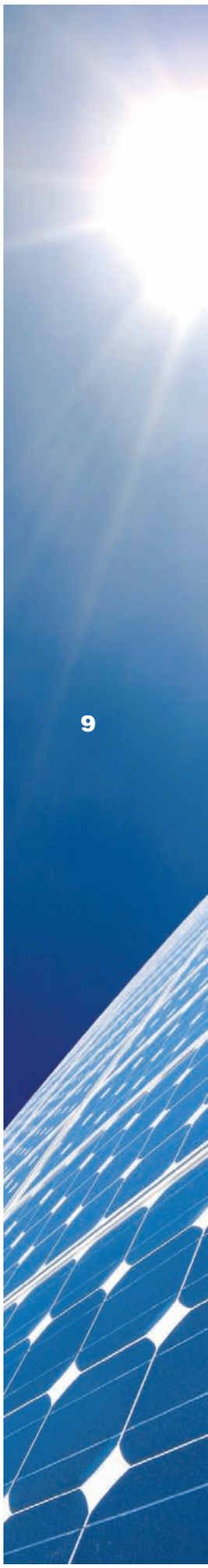
In diplomatic language of IEA there is:

> *»a need to strengthen public energy administrations and market institutions across the Western Balkans, including a clear separation of the functions of policy making, regulation and ownership. This means ensuring that administrations have the capacity, resources and statistical data to develop strategies and implement policies in a wide range of areas – not only in market regulation, but also in terms of energy efficiency, energy security, energy poverty and the impact of energy use on the environment. Such policies and strategies must be formulated in a transparent way that involves broad public consultation. The establishment of fully independent and empowered regulators must also be a priority. Leaving the reform process unfinished would perpetuate current vulnerabilities and leave fragmented markets open to the risk of being controlled by under-regulated monopolies and dominant suppliers.*
>
> *This Survey underlines the need to follow through with market-based reforms in order to attract and optimise the new investments needed to establish a firm foundation for more sustainable and reliable energy supply. It also suggests that the Western Balkans have much to gain from a regional approach to energy security and greater integration of markets.*[7] *«*

In more direct language of environmental NGOs position paper on Energy:[8]

> *»In most countries in the region there is a monopoly in the energy market that results in distortions, corruption in decision-making processes, and long-term problems in modernization, introduction of state of the art technologies and the retention of out-dated energy concepts. In the long run this will cause countries to fall behind both economically and socially and can lead to economic, social and in the end political instabilities. Such problems cannot be solved by »diversification of supply of liquid hydro carbonates« or by using existing local coal deposits (valid for almost all countries in the region) because this would result in: greater fiscal deficit; growing damages on the environment from the usage of fossil fuels; bring significant parts of society to the brink of energy poverty; and growing structural imbalances of economies in the region.*
>
> *Civil sector stakeholders (unions, farmers' associations, youth groups) see energy as an issue outside of their field of interest. Environmental CSOs in the region have until now been the most active in promoting energy efficiency and greater use of renewables, but, due to lack of capacity, often in a sporadic, uncoordinated and reactive manner.«*

With the following case studies we would like to compare energy policies and the political will in the region and EU in regard to implementation of energy efficiency and RES.



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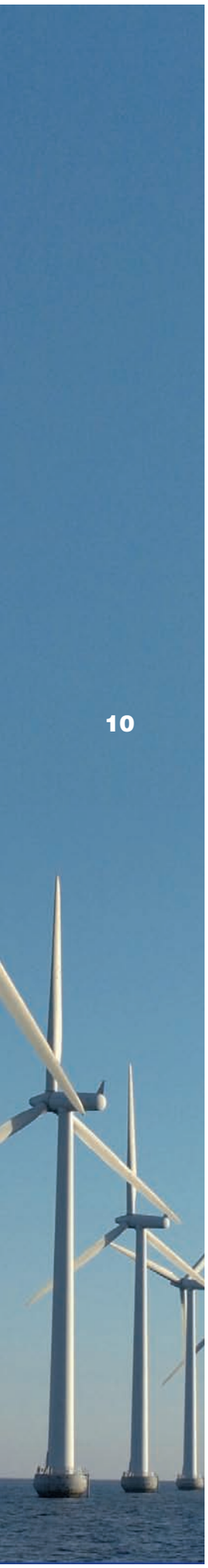
[7] IEA (2008): »Energy in the Western Balkans: The path to reform and reconstruction«, Paris. p.11

[8] **http://www.envforum.eu/lib/exe/fetch.php/events/annual_meetings/annual_meeting_2011/envforum_2011_am_-_ngo_position_paper_-_energy.pdf**



Case study 1: »We are too poor to invest in energy efficiency«

Everyone agrees that the most obvious and attractive field of improvement of the current policies and practices in power sectors of the region is energy efficiency. For some reason, there is an obvious lack of activities in that area. Despite the verbal support for energy saving and efficiency, even from the utilities experts, serious actions are blocked and the effective institutional strengthening is prevented. Usual excuse for the lack of progress in this field is »a lack of funds for investments«. That may be the truth for domestic sources, but if there is a lack of domestically available funds for energy efficiency, what about the possible funding sources from international institutions?

On the web page of Energy Community Secretariat, there is telling information:

> ***On 1 December 2010**, the Energy Community Secretariat organised, jointly with the European Commission DG Enlargement, a workshop on Energy Efficiency Support Mechanisms in the Western Balkans. With an aim to define the barriers to financing energy efficiency projects, the workshop brought together the members of the Energy Efficiency Task Force and representatives of the International Financial Institutions (IFI), bilateral donors, as well as from commercial banks.*
>
> *To guarantee a better co-ordination of the supporting efforts, the DG Enlargement recently established an IFI Co-ordination Office in Brussels. Based on the Office's report on energy efficiency support mechanism, **there are 33 energy efficiency funds and credit lines in Western Balkans. Whilst the sum of these amounts to total of 1.377,24 billion Euros, the amount of used funds accounts only for fraction of the total.** Due to low public awareness, it is very difficult for both the IFI and commercial banks to sell energy efficiency projects. On the other hand better coordination with national agencies responsible for promotion of energy efficiency is indispensible. It is, therefore, essential that IFIs provide technical assistance to the banks. In this respect, it is important to emphasize the win – win situation, including the positive job effect. The commercial banks, in return, stressed that the IFIs should have more flexibility in their reporting requirements, in order not to overburden the borrowers and the financial intermediaries. Governmental representatives from the Contracting Parties pointed out that they are lacking information with regard to available financial mechanisms, as well as (in some cases) low attractiveness of credit lines provided by commercial banks.*[9]

Case study 2: use of EU funds, example of Operational Programme »Environment and Energy« in Croatia 2011

In May 2011 Ministry for the Environment has published information that development of the Operational Programme »Environment and Energy« has started, and presented the list of projects to be potentially funded from the Cohesion and Structural Funds in 2013 within this programme.

As the National Strategic Reference Framework[10] recognizes »Environment protection and sustainable energy use« as a thematic priority, one would expect that the list of projects contains number of projects promoting use of renewable energy and energy efficiency.

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[9] **http://www.energy-community.org/portal/page/portal/ENC_HOME/NEWS/News_Details?p_new_id=3921**

[10] A National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) establishes the main priorities for spending the EU structural funding a member state receives between 2007 and 2013. Each member state has its own NSRF. Adopting an NSRF is a new requirement of the Structural Funds regulations for 2007 to 2013. Each NSRF functions as a high-level strategy for the Operational Programmes in the respective member state. The document provides an overview of the economic strengths and weaknesses of the member state's regions, and sets out the approach to future Structural Funds spending across the member state.

Indicative list of projects (213 in total) contains 156 »waste management« type projects, mostly landfill remediation; 39 »water management« type projects; 13 »nature protection« type projects; 4 »energy« type projects and 1 »air protection« type project. Number of projects in different areas clearly indicates priorities of Ministry and the Government and the influence of water and waste »management« business sectors.

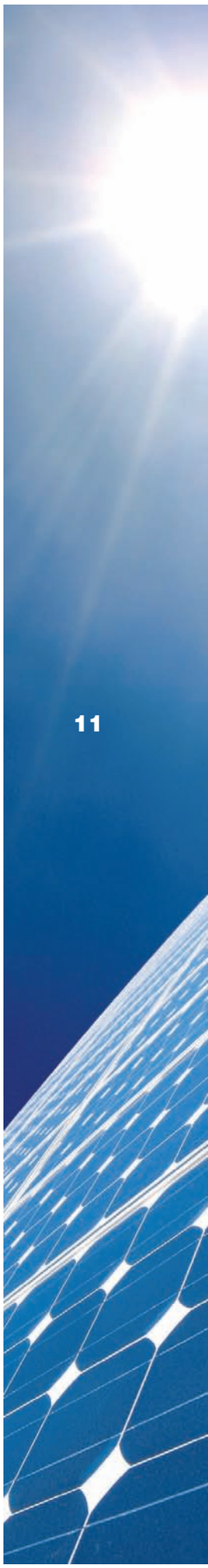
In addition to the clear underrepresentation of the energy type projects, even larger problem is its content. Despite the official goal of the OP »Environment and Energy« to »develop energy infrastructure with the highlight on sustainable use of energy and energy efficiency« which should be achieved with »support for transition from traditional to renewable energy sources and energy efficiency«, nominated projects, with an exception of one, clearly have nothing with the specified goal. These projects are:

1. **Power plant on biomass near Velika Gorica –** Construction of Biomass power plant in the industrial zone near the city of Velika Gorica. Planned installed capacity of the power plant is 20MW el. and 30MW heat; Beneficiary: HEP Obnovljivi d.o.o. Total cost: 59,5 million Euros
2. **Regional gas pipeline Kukuljanovo-Omišalj –** Construction of Regional gas pipeline Kukuljanovo/Omišalj DN 500/100; Beneficiary: Plinacro d.o.o. Total cost: 23 million Euros
3. **Storage capacities for mandatory stock reserves for Crude Oil and Petroleum Products – Brižine –** Construction and reconstruction of storage capacities for Crude Oil and Petroleum Products 100.000m$^{3;}$ Beneficiary: The Croatian Compulsory Oil Stocks Agency (HANDA) Total cost: 30 million Euros
4. **Storage capacities for mandatory stock reserves for Crude Oil and Petroleum Products – Gaženica –** Construction and reconstruction of storage capacities for Crude Oil and Petroleum Products 50.000m^3; Beneficiary: The Croatian Compulsory Oil Stocks Agency (HANDA) Total cost: 15 million Euros[11]

From this short project description, it is clear that only the first one qualifies to be considered as a project that promotes sustainable energy, and also the only one in line with the officially proclaimed aims of the OP.

According to the available information from the Central Office for Development Strategy and Coordination of EU Funds,[12] Croatia will be able to access total of 3.568 mill Euros out of which 2.392,3 mill Euros for »sustainable development« and 681,3 mill Euros for »protection and management of natural resources«.

In the light of this information only sustainable energy project, if fully funded through SF/CF in claimed project value (85% of cca 60 mill Euros), will draw approximately 50 million Euros or 1.66 % of total commitment appropriations for »sustainable development« and »protection and management of natural resources«. In addition to absurdly small financial allocation for renewable energy and energy efficiency in OP indicative list of projects, it is clear that spending all the funds in construction of only one large biomass power plant could hardly be seen as an acceptable portfolio of projects promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency in the entire Croatia.



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11 **http://www.vlada.hr/hr/naslovnica/sjednice_i_odluke_vlade_rh/2010/80_sjednica_vlade_republike_hrvatske** (1.1. dn.reda)

12 Šimunić Ana, Priprema RH za Strukturne fondove, Zagreb 21. February 2011.

According to the Bankwatch Network and FoE Europe:

> *SF/CF are the EU's main common financial muscle to promote its goals in the energy field. If the EU is really serious about achieving its energy goals, its funding through SF/CF must include robust, systematic and well-targeted support for EE/RE. Symbolic support here and there will not suffice. Indeed, EE and RE are emphasised as one of the 12 priority areas for SF/CF investments by the Community Strategic Guidelines for Cohesion 2007-2013.4 Although there is no earmarking for the use of SF/CF, it could be theoretically expected that approximately one-twelfth, i.e. 8.5%, of total EU funding allocations will be invested into this priority area.*
>
> *Our analysis of the draft Operational Programmes of the CEE countries reveals major differences between the plans of the different countries. The results show that unless the OPs are subjected to considerable modifications, EU funding support for EE/RE in CEE countries in 2007-2013 will be sorely inconsistent and insufficient.*
>
> *Only Lithuania can be said to be taking EE/RE seriously in its draft plans, by allocating 5.4% of all its SF/CF money for it, followed by Slovenia with 3.8%. On the other side of the spectrum, Poland, Hungary and most probably also Bulgaria are planning to give only token support for EE/RE, allocating just around 1% of all EU funding for it. In particular, the allocations for energy efficiency are extremely low in Poland and Hungary – at 0.5% of their EU money. It is worth noting in this context that Poland and Hungary are the two member states which have most resisted adoption of any EU targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.* [13]

If we compare indicative percentage of Croatian allocations for renewables and energy efficiency of cca 1.66, with indicative allocations in the draft OP of 10 CEE Member states (as of February 2007) smaller percentage could be found only in Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria.

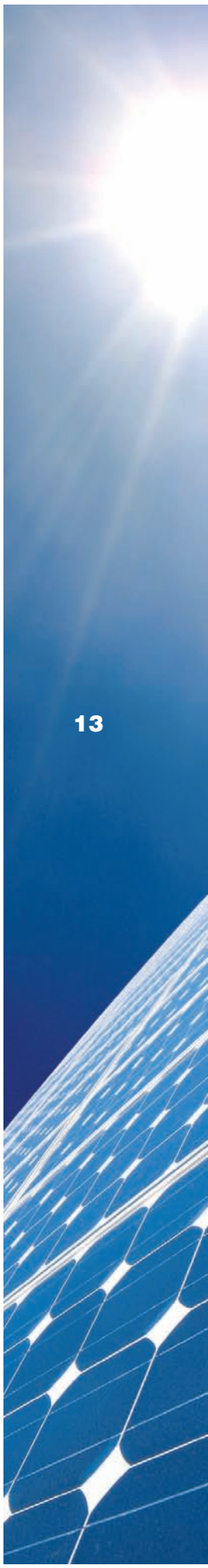
[13] **http://www.inforse.org/europe/Structuralfunds/SF_docs/SF_EUfunds4energy.pdf**

4. GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

In addition to the common EU energy and climate policies in member states, there are numerous examples of successful sustainable energy development at national and local levels. In this context, we present few examples of good practice that could serve as a model to our responsible institutions.

Munich in Germany is a great example of a big city which adopted financial and technical plan to produce 100% electricity from renewable energy sources by 2025. City of Munich posses entirely *Stadtwekre Munchen GmbH (SWM)* which plays a crucial role in energy policy that plans to make Munich by 2015 a first big German city where private consumers (households) will be supplied with the electricity coming exclusively from RES owned by the city of Munich. The goal is to cover total needs for electricity, including economy, from *green sources* by 2025.Until then they plan to invest 9 billion Euros in land and on sea wind turbines, geothermal and biomass projects as well as solar and hydro plants. They are already offering their customers electricity produced in a reliable and environmentally acceptable manner. It consists of combination of 75% energy from efficient power plants that use cogeneration and 25% from power plants that use RES. Also, customers have a choice to actively participate in environmental protection by paying the increased price for the energy that comes particularly from hydro power plants (so called M-Natur tariff), and all earned money is invested for more energy coming from RES in Munich.[14]

Guessing in Austria is another example of good practice in using RES, when the goal of energy self-sustainability was achieved in 2001. Guessing is a small town in Burgenland, once one of the poorest areas in Austria, with 27000 people and without any meaningful infrastructure. High energy costs (for oil, gas and electricity) meant a big drain of capital from the region, while the existing resources such as 45% of wood stayed mostly unused. In 1990 the experts have developed a revolutionary model that demanded complete abandonment of fossil fuels. Its goal was to primary supply Guessing (and then the entire county) with renewable energy from local and accessible sources. Forecast was that this will bring additional cost benefit to the entire region. Model encompassed heat production and production of fuels and electricity. First steps were targeted measures of energy savings in Guessing. This meant the optimization of already existing system which cut down the energy consumption up to 50%. Then they approached the heating system, first they built 2 smaller power plants, and then 1 large on wood mass that is abundant in this area, for heating the whole Guessing. Next step was to build a plant that produces fuels from seed rape for all vehicles. A group of scientists has heard of this project and they decided to build a test drive that produces alternative fuel out of wood. The success was complete and one of the by products of creating electric power was heat that was used for heating water for the local heating system. All this demands lots of wood mass but the citizens of Guessing are aware if this and they make sure that their woods are forested in order to have a constant supply of wooden mass. The goal of energy self-reliance was achieved in 2001 when they opened a biomass power plant *(BiomasseKraftwerkGüssing)* that lies on new technology of biomass gasification and that was success from the very beginning. Once poor, today Guessing annually produces more energy (heat, fuel and electricity) from renewables than the city can spend.[15] Guessing annually produces more energy (heat, fuel and electricity) from RES that the city alone can spend, and today this is a place where scientists come to make research on new technologies and apply them later.



[14] http://www.swm.de/english.html

[15] http://guessingrenewableenergy.com/gussing/

The Biomass **Bystricko** project is an example of good practise initiated by Slovakian NVO CEPA (Friends of the Earth Slovakia) from Ponicka Huta in central Slovakia that have successfully implemented technical project on substitution of old coal heating facilities with the 21 biomass (waste wood) boilers in 8 villages of Banska Bystrica region. The implementation of the project was done in co-operation with the local municipalities which are the main beneficiaries of the project. CEPA decided to develop the project with their own resources (staff and funding). Preparation started in the year 2003 and the final approval by the governmental agency responsible for EU structural funds (SF) was signed in 2009 and the operation of facilities started in 2010. The EU SF has covered 95% of the 7 mill EUR project costs and the rest came from own resources of municipalities or bank loans. There were more than 6 years of struggling to overcome the technical, administrative and legal problems related to this project.

The aim of the project was to replace old and obsolete heating systems in 32 public buildings in 8 rural villages (Kordiky, Kraliky, Riecka, Tajov, Lubietova, Hiadel, Poniky, Molca, Cierny Balog – 10300 inhabitants) in Central Slovakia with modern woodchips-based systems, and to encourage other rural regions with similar renewable energy potential to use their local resources. Project was planned to impact sustainability in order to enhance economic self-sufficiency of rural areas through the use of local biomass potential for local energy needs. To save municipal expenses for heating of public buildings that will decrease and savings will become available for municipal (regional) development. To reduce the total CO2 emissions by approximately 8.5 thousand tons in 10 years, and to equip public buildings with efficient heating systems, as most of the current boilers and heat distribution systems required serious reconstruction anyway.

The Biomass Bystricko project realized in Central Slovakia showed that it is possible to utilise EU Structural funds in environmentally friendly and energy sustainable way by the local NGO. The NGO involvement in utilization of EU SF in such a broad range is not usual in Slovakia. Nevertheless the experience shows that similar projects can be organized in similar way in many regions of new EU member states. There is a real need for changing energy infrastructure towards more sustainable or renewable energy pathway which is still not the case in Central and Eastern Europe. The development of RE projects in new EU MS is far from satisfactory and new ideas or ways of funding are urgently needed. It is a pity that the goals set in EU legislation like RE targets will not be met by many new EU MS and all this despite of availability of huge EU funds which can be used this way, but the opportunity is missed, yet. But, the experience shows that similar projects can be organised in similar way in many regions of new EU member states.[16]

[16] INFORSE, Good practice – Example of successful project financed from EU SF

5. ROLE FOR CSOs IN THE REGION

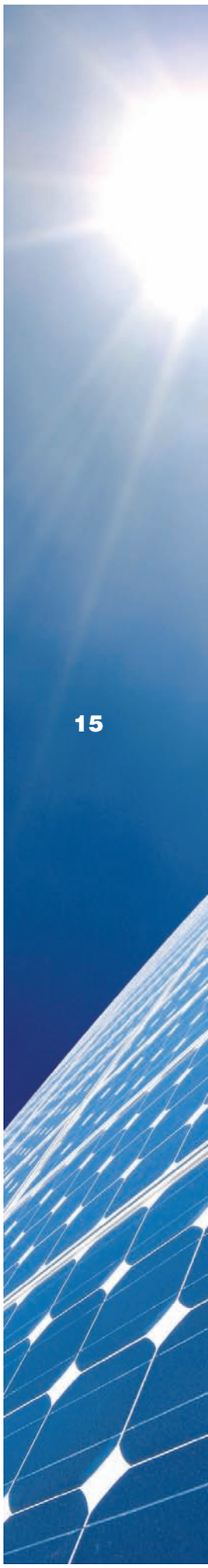
South East Europe region, rich in solar, biomass and wind energy resources, can contribute significantly to the realization of European climate and renewable energy policy goals for 2020 and beyond. Crucial in achieving that is to ensure political will on national and local level and general public support. At the moment there is an obvious lack of political will and the public support appears to be generally positive but, as there are no large projects in the field we still cannot be sure that there will be no public opposition to the RES projects. As the experience from the numerous European countries shows, public support seems to be proportional to the ownership participation in the RES capacities to be installed. Based on this goal for the environmental CSOs should not be just increase of RES utilization but also fair share of local ownership over the local future RES capacities. As good practice examples we can use Denmark where ¾ of wind capacity are locally owned and another example is Germany where over 50% of the current installed renewable capacity is owned by private citizens and farmers, compared to less than 10% by the four largest utilities.[17]

Unfortunately at the moment, in the countries of the SEE region, there are no influential institutions or coalitions that would advocate and implement numerous activities necessary for achieving this goal. In such situation, environmental CSOs could play an extremely important role in advocating that goal, both by themselves and through building broader coalitions, including other segments of civil society interested in development issues, such as farmers, unions, youth etc. Obviously, severe lack of organisational capacity, at the moment, among the environmental CSOs in the region represents a huge barrier for fulfilling such role. Some of the activities, namely campaigns against new large hydro or coal power plants, which are necessary in changing the existing unsustainable energy policies towards larger RES implementation, environmental CSOs will have to undertake mainly by themselves, hopefully in cooperation with locally affected communities. Luckily, most of the other less conflicting activities will be possible to carry out through broader civil society coalitions, but probably their establishment and facilitation will be carried out by the environmental CSOs.

Advocacy activities

In the absence of stronger involvement of other sectors in energy policy development and implementation, environmental CSOs have an extremely important role as a watch dog and an advocate of sustainable energy agenda. Possible activities include monitoring and participation in the development of new national energy legislation, strategies and implementation documents, active participation in related public dialogue, analysis of government draft proposals, and elaboration of alternative proposals. Monitoring of and lobbying for improvement of relevant national and international financial mechanisms for larger use of energy efficiency and renewable energy resources. Many of these activities could be implemented also on a local level where special importance could have an elaboration of »alternative« energy plans.

Public campaigns against »dirty« energy projects consisting of petitions, advocacy direct actions, building awareness among local community etc. are and probably will remain for some time the most important and challenging type of activity. Unfortunately, we have a limited number of such campaigns implemented successfully throughout the region. Specific aspect of that activity is that regional and international cooperation could be a very effective assistance in their implementation because practically all »dirty« energy projects have foreign investors.



[17] BMU, *Entwurf Erfahrungsbericht 2011 zum Energien Gesetz,* May 2011. Available online: **http://www.bmu.de/files/pdfs/allgemein/application/pdf/eeg_erfahrungsbericht_2011_entwurf.pdf**

Educational activities

Very important precondition for the shift towards sustainable energy is development of much stronger educational resources dedicated to the energy saving and use of renewable energy in the region. If we want to ensure that local communities and stakeholders take active part in utilization of local RES, it is necessary to establish or develop a number of local educational or training centres targeting different segments of public and using whole spectrum of educational methods. Environmental CSOs do not have the capacity and should not try to develop and implement educational activities suitable to the dedicated educational institutions (universities, official prequalification programmes etc.) but there is a whole array of possible and needed educational activities. Clear advantage of environmental CSOs in implementing them is not just enthusiasm but the fact that we do not treat information as a commodity, resulting in readiness to share and disseminate relevant information and expertise as strongly as possible.

Educational tools and activities implemented successfully by CSOs in other European countries, which are at disposal to environmental CSOs in the region, vary from simple educational info leaflet production and handouts to development of permanent educational centres.

Good practice example

Educational centre for sustainable energy »Solar Academy« on Island Šolta, Croatia. Environmental NGO Zelena akcija (Friends of the Earth Croatia) is developing an educational centre called the »Solar Academy« in the field of sustainable energy and environment protection, which focuses on the methodology of public advocacy and technology for use of RES. Educational activities mostly consist of weekly workshops and seminars. The goal is to use the Centre for professional gatherings of international and national institutions that work in the field of environment protection and promotion of sustainable development. The Solar Academy is situated in the former military barracks on the island Šolta near Split which was donated to Zelena akcija by the Croatian government for the period of 10 years. Zelena akcija, in cooperation with many international institutions, renovated the facility to an educational centre »Solar Academy«, where environmental and other NGO activists from Croatia and the SEE region are trained on environmental protection and in particular how to use RES. So far, the Academy has successfully organized twelve international and national volunteer camps with 200 volunteers, 10 seminars, workshops or internal gatherings. The biggest event was held from 15-22 August 2009 when Young Friends of the Earth (YFOEE) and Zelena akcija organized a week long preparatory conference and training for more than 70 participants from all over the Europe. This meeting was prepared as an educational/media tool for the mobilisation of youth to actively participate in the public debate on the future climate change negotiations at the UNFCCC COP in Copenhagen in 2009.[18]

Other attractive educational type of activity, already successfully implemented in the region, are practical skill-share workshops. Several NGOs in the region are already implementing such activities on the topic of self construction of solar collectors where participants get skills and knowledge on how to produce solar collector for heating water at lower cost.

Promotional activities

Active public promotion of energy efficiency and use of renewable energy resources by organization of public events, dissemination of examples of good practice in EU, and media activities is another large area of possible activities of environmental CSOs. In the current absence of such promotional activities by responsible official institutions (among few exceptions is UNDP with its public campaigns on energy efficiency) these activities are left either to the civil or business sector. Clear advantage of CSOs in implementing such public promotion campaigns is the fact that CSOs do not have direct financial interest in promotion of those technologies, thus campaigns have a higher credibility in public.

[18] www.zelena-akcija.hr



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