

RURENER

Network of small
RURal communities for
ENERgetic-neutrality



01/2010

NEWSLETTER

To the reader,

welcome to the first edition of the RURENER newsletter! This newsletter is aiming to inform you, the working and decision making people in small rural communities, the decision makers on regional, national and European level in terms of energy policies and any other interested elsewhere about the work done within the RURENER network to date and any other relevant news and information.

This first edition is dedicated to the presentation of the project. Later on you will have main themes originating in energy policies, renewable energy and energy saving. Categories you will always find are "between you", "focus", "in brief" and "zoom on". You will get one quarterly and in addition we will irregularly send brief emails to highlight current news, which are linked to our web site www.rurener.eu.

We hope you enjoy reading it, if so please forward it to interested colleagues and subscribe to the newsletter by sending an email to info@rurener.eu. If you don't like it, you can also unsubscribe there.



Focus

Energy savings and renewable energy sources are often taken from the environmental point of view and climate change issue. Small rural communities in Europe, joined in the RURENER Network have chosen to make energy policy an axis for economic and social development of their territories too.

Create new activities, sell electricity, reduce costs for heating, optimise the use of local renewable resources, promote their community, mobilise their population around a collective project, etc. are some of the socio-economic benefits of an integrated energy policy at the community level. It brings also a positive image to attract investors, new population, or tourists in the villages.

Peyrelevade (850 inhabitants in France) gave an opportunity for one of his young inhabitants to create his activity to supply the biomass plant, Nagypali (200 inhabitants in Hungary) welcomes each year tourists and trainees in its renewable energy innovation centre, in Wesendorf (15.000 inhabitants in Germany) agricultural sub-products are used to produce biogas for part of the population.

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Many examples are shared in the RURENER Network to prove that an energy policy will bring welfare and strong dynamic into rural areas, especially when private and public actors work jointly on implementing measures.



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What is RURENER about?

The **RURENER** project is a network of small rural communities (villages and small towns) that want to reach a neutral energy print at the local level.

The Network will bring tools and methods to support its members' energy strategy set-up and evaluation. It will allow them to share experience, learn from each other and promote their action through mentoring and twinning activities.

Thanks to this support, small rural municipalities will implement concrete action plans at the local level aiming at energy efficiency. Production of renewable energy sources, investment to save energy in buildings, education, information, etc. will be at the heart of the local energy strategies. The different actions set up will lead to better use of local resources and opportunities and bring innovative local development to small rural communities throughout Europe.

RURENER will disseminate actions and results to welcome new members and become a living network of villages and small towns committed to Energetic Neutrality objectives.

Who are the actors?

RURENER is built by a consortium of 12 project partners from: France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Greece, Romania, Hungary and the UK.

All bring very important mix of different skills and expertise. These are: the Association for Economic & Industrial Development of Massif Central (FR), the Association for Local Initiatives in the Field of Energy & Environment (FR), Bay Zoltan Foundation for Applied Research (HU), Centre for Renewable Energy Sources (EL), Technological Educational Institute of Kavala (EL), Intercoop (ES), Kairos Spa (IT), Research Institute for Ecology and Economy applied to Alpine Areas (IT), EnerMaTec GmbH (DE), Municipal Environmental Campaign U.A.N (DE), University of Bacau (RO), and ruralnet futures (UK). But the main actors and beneficiaries are the pilot communities, which are: Atzeneta del Maestrat (SP), Călimanesti-Căciulata (RO), Keratea (EL), Nagypali (HU), Nikiforos (EL), Perkupa (HU), Peyrelevade (FR), Saint-Etienne de Lugdares (FR), Saint Jean d'Alcapiès (FR), Schladen (DE), Wesendorf (DE), Schöningen (DE), Taşca (RO), Tirano (IT). You find further information about partners and pilots on the project web site www.rurener.eu, which link to national web sites in partner languages, too. And the one or the other will be mentioned again in one of the next newsletters.

But the network is open to communities or associations of communities located in rural areas with a maximum of 350 inhabitants/km² or 15.000 inhabitants in total. Potential members should express clearly their willingness to become energetic-neutral investing in renewable energy sources and in the rational use of energy.

Expression of interest to become a RURENER network member should be send to: info@rurener.eu.

So please come and join us!

Between us

The RURENER partners will meet again from March 10 – 12 in Tirano (IT). On the second day a European event will be offered to all interested in the project. You will find the agenda on www.rurener.eu. If you are interested in coming please contact laura.albani@irealp.it. We hope to welcome you in Tirano!

The RURENER partners are working on a road-map towards energetic neutrality. It will be composed of several packages, published on-line and tested by pilot communities. These packages will contain the issues awareness raising, community profiling and commitment, energy footprint in households, public buildings, industry and commerce, as well as communication and funding options.

RURENER goes Brussels: during this years' European Sustainable Energy week on March 23rd we want to discuss with European policy and decision makers about European Energy policy and local action in rural areas. If you are interested in joining the event, please contact info@rurener.eu.

INTERCOOP has attended the meeting on Energy Sustainability as a key for Inter-regional Development. It was held on Wednesday the 25th of November of 2009 in the framework of the International Fair on Energy Efficiency and New Technological Solutions for Renewable and Conventional Energy and it consisted of a meeting on the impact of technology for rural development. Intercoop demonstrated its interest in promoting a sustainable use of energy and presented the RURENER network.

In brief

The EU Sustainable Energy Week is the reference event for sustainable issues in Europe. It forms part of the Sustainable Energy Europe Campaign which is an initiative of the European Commission launched in 2005.

EUSEW is organised by the Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI) on behalf of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Energy and Transport. Various activities will take place from March 22 – 26 in Brussels and all over Europe.

For further information please go to www.eusew.eu.

During the 16th – 19th of March 2010, Bucharest invites you to the 5th edition of ExpoRenewEnergy, the international exhibition that takes place at the ROMEXPO Exhibitions Center from Bucharest.

For further information please go to www.expoenergy.ro.

Zoom on

Interview with Pietro Del Simone,

Mayor of Tirano (IT), one of the RURENER pilot communities



Why are you joining the project? What did you learn so far?

The council of Tirano welcomed the proposal of the Lombardy Region (DG Agricoltura) and IREALP to join the Rurener network seeing as it represents an opportunity to improve local strategies for sustainable development. The comparison

with other European realities is helping us to better understand the different options that we could put into practice in order to improve our energy efficiency.

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How would you define energetic neutrality?

Energy self-sufficiency is, for us, the possibility of locally producing most of the energy we need by exploiting territorial resources and thus creating a local added value also in terms of revenue.

What are the development objectives/potentials for your region?

The production of energy from renewable sources must go hand in hand with the use of local resources - in our case in particular, the development of forest-wood-energy. We will then further develop co-operation between forestry operators, sawmills and producers of energy from biomass by promoting partnerships with the public sector. The council of Tirano also aims to work on energy saving via the renovation of public buildings with materials and technologies that improve efficiency. In addition, with regards to the construction of new homes the idea is to apply appropriate urban planning standards which facilitate the construction of energy-efficient buildings (discount charges, etc.)

What is the biggest problem/challenge on the way to energetic neutrality in Tirano?

The production of energy requires a constant supply of biomass that ensures the operation of installations and their profitability: the fragmentation of suppliers and the difficulty in ensuring the provision of local biomass are a problem for the effective sustainability of energy production.

As for the improvement of the efficiency of public buildings, the main problem is posed by the costs of carrying out modernisation and renovation of such buildings.

What do you expect from the meeting in Tirano?

From these workshops in Tirano we expect from one side to compare ourselves with other communities in order to welcome new suggestions that could be applied in local politics and secondly to show our guests a territorial reality which is rich in resources and innovation in the field of energy.



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