

ENER'Cyprus - 2017

RURENER

General Assembly



Final Report



Date: 16 > 18 November 2017

Place: Larnaca, Republic of Cyprus

Collaborators & co-funders:

ΠΕΡΙΦΕΡΕΙΑΚΗ ΕΝΩΣΗ ΣΥΝΔΕΣΜΩΝ  ΑΠΟΔΗΜΩΝ ΠΙΤΣΙΛΙΑΣ Π.Ε.Σ.Α.Π.



Program overview

Thursday 16/11/2017:

- 20h – Welcoming dinner of participants by Cypriot hosts

Friday 17/11/2017:

- 9h – Conferences
- 13h – Round table
- 14h – Lunch and visit of Larnaca
- 16h30 – RURENER General Assembly

Saturday 18/11/2017:

- 9h – Field visits
- 16h – Lunch and exchanges with local representative (Pelendri)
- 20h – Informal exchanges and conclusions

Sunday 19/11/2017:

- Travel back

DETAILED REPORT

After a warm welcoming dinner of the Cypriot hosts from PESAP organization (Union of Former Residents (Apodimoi) of the Pitsilia Region) on Thursday 16th of November, the core of the event starts on Friday 17th in the morning with conferences on the energy transition in rural areas with the case study of Cyprus. Presentations are in English and are translated into French and Hungarian for non-English speaking participants.



Friday 17th of November 2017

Conferences: The energy transition challenges in rural areas

Christos Eliades, president of PESAP opens the event by thanking speakers and European participants for their attendance and commitment. He takes a moment to introduce the focus point of the seminar on the energy transition in rural areas and integrated rural development. As president of PESAP, he says a few words on the organization hosting this event and promoting the rural region of Pitsilia in the Troodos mountain range in Cyprus. He also underlines the transversal aspect of energy issues to address rural development and draws a rapid picture of the specific challenges that the Troodos region is facing in terms of development, challenges that are facing many other rural territories of Europe. Finally, Christos put an emphasis on the need for rural territories and communities to work together and cooperate at the European level. Following up on these optimistic words, Tibor Kócse, president of RURENER, gives a speech to thank Christos and PESAP organization for hosting RURENER general assembly, and all speakers and participants. He introduces the network and reminds RURENER's vision to support rural communities in the implementation of their energy strategy by giving examples of Nagypáli in Hungary as mayor of the village; and to promote the exchange of experiences and good practices at the European level with two key words: innovation and cooperation.

Details of interventions:

SESSION I: Energy Challenges for Cyprus & the Case of the Troodos Region

Chair: Prof. Vassiliki Kazana

- **Energy Challenges for Cyprus** – Iosif Spyrides, Energy Inspector, Energy Service, Ministry of Energy Commerce, Industry and Tourism
- **Energy in transition and options for Cyprus** - Dr Venizelos Efthymiou, Chairman, FOSS Research Centre, University of Cyprus
- **Integrated Development Plan of the Troodos Region** – Kyriakos E. Georgiou, Engineer, Economist, PESAP & University of Nicosia

SESSION II: Pilot Projects

Chair: Dr Venizelos Efthymiou

- **Local Energy Actions for Sustainable Development in the Rural Areas of Cyprus** - Maria Achilleos. Architectural Engineer, Cyprus Energy Agency
- **Applications for Sustainable Rural Areas** - Anthi Charalambous, Head of Energy & Environment Service, Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation
- **The Orites Wind Farm: from Conception to Operation** - Neofytos Constantinou, O&M Manager, Orites Wind Farm
- **The Development of an Optimized Power Plant Utilizing Renewable Energy For Small Rural Communities (R.EN.COM)** – Prof. George Papageorgiou, Department of Management and Marketing, European University
- Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development, Natural Resources and Environment





Round Table Discussion: European and Local Challenges and the Way Forth.

Chair: Kyriakos E. Georgiou

Participants:

- Christos Eliades, President of PESAP
- Dr Venizelos Efthymiou, Chairman FOSS Research Centre, University of Cyprus
- Philippe Cortès, CEO of Grange solaire, RURENER Vice president
- Vassiliki Kazana, professor at Eastern Macedonia and Thrace Institute of Technology

Context:

- ➔ The maturity of technologies for production of renewable energy is no longer an issue and prices have drastically decreased making investment accessible to public and private stakeholders. Regulations are not as fast and can be a barrier.
- ➔ The energy transition is a necessity and an opportunity for rural territories that have great resources to promote. The implementation of the energy transition must be a lever for rural development.
- ➔ Changing mindsets and mentalities is fundamental to achieve the transition. Self-consumption and new practices are the current biggest challenges.

Discussion:

Energy storage: although it would allow a better flexibility and resilience of energy systems relying on a renewable energy mix, storage solutions are not as mature as other technologies (solar panels...) and much more expensive. Today it is economically more interesting to add one solar panel than to invest in a battery for storing solar energy. Competition will take prices down tremendously in the coming years but for now it remains uncertain.

Self-consumption and grid integration: The role of consumers is very important to achieve the energy transition, especially concerning energy saving (as it has been highlighted before with the necessity of changing behaviors) and energy efficiency (renovation of houses...). Citizens must be involved in the energy transition as key stakeholders. Energy precariousness touches many rural households and the budget spent on energy by citizens and municipalities is not a fatality. Local production and self-consumption must be considered in order to diversify incomes (for farmers for instance) and maintain incomes on the territory. Self-consumption is interesting environmentally as it promotes the production of renewable energy, economically as the money spent on energy remains in the region, socially as it engages citizens and local stakeholders. A barrier that remains today is the connection to the grid that can be extremely expensive. However, being connected to the grid offers many advantages in terms of flexibility and adaptation to the demand. Micro-grids can be an interesting solution in ultra-rural areas.



Mobility: Mobility is a great challenge for rural areas in terms of air pollution but also for social inclusion. Even if electric mobility is developing very fast with ever-growing autonomy of EV, but in the mid- and long-term, it is not a sustainable solution as new problems will arise (charging stations, overload of the electric grid...). A change in practices and a new approach to car and personal vehicles must be implemented. There cannot be a car per person on the planet, electric or not. Other ways of transportation must be promoted such as soft mobility (bikes, walk) and public transportation.

Lunch and Visit to the City of Larnaca and Hallan Sultan Mosque

- Visit of the city center of Larnaca and of Saint Lazarus Orthodox church, build during the IX^e century where laid the grave of Lazarus of Bethany.
- Larnaca Salt Lake is a protected site since 1997. In the winter migratory birds stay in the Lake, particularly flamingos between November and March, as well as wild ducks and other birds. The food chain of this ecosystem relies on Artemia salina, a small shrimp. Bird species mostly depend on this shrimp and when they cannot find it they go on towards lake Akroitiri in Lemesos and further South toward Africa, following their migratory trajectory.
- Visit of Hala Sultan Tekke Mosque or Umm Haram Mosque. It is a muslim sanctuary on the West coast of the Salt Lake, near Larnaca. It is the third place for muslim pilgrimage in the world.

RURENER General Assembly

Opening of the session by Tibor Kócse, RURENER President

Introduction of active members (and future members for 2018):

In Hungary:

- Village de Nagypáli
- Village de Győrvár
- La région de Nyugat-Magyarországi

In Cyprus:

- PESAP (organization)

In Spain:

- Associació d'Iniciatives Rurals de Catalunya (ARCA)
- Local Action Group Ripollès Ges Bisaura

In Belgium:

- APERe (network)
- Province of Luxembourg

In Greece:

- Municipality of Prespes
- Municipality of Paranesti

In France:

- La Commune du Mené
- La Communauté d'Agglomération de l'Ouest Rhodanien
- Agricultural Cooperative Fermes de Figeac (2018)
- Regional Natural park of Millevaches en Limousin (2018)
- Macéon (organization)

Partner networks:

- Positive Energy Territories - TEPOS (France)
- European Countryside Movement (Europe)
- Ecolise, European network for community led initiatives on climate change and sustainability (Europe)
- Global 100% Renewable Energy (International)

Activity report

2016, a year of reflection for RURENER. Three main challenges:

1. Revive the network and mobilize inactive members
2. Reassess RURENER's presence at the EU level: partnership with the European Countryside Movement
3. Diversification of funding sources: towards economic independence

2016 was also a year of changes for RURENER: the network relied on Macéo until 2016 and was then transformed in a « start-up » like network. This transformation allowed to reinforce RURENER's European dimension and freshen up the dynamic. Four main changes in 2016:

1. Christelle (Lefèvre), former organizer of the network since 2012 moved to new horizons.
2. In turn, RURENER hired its first employee: a European coordinator (may 2017)
3. A new communication plan was envisioned
4. Development of a new project "2017, Year of Innovation for Rural Energy » funded the French national fund and subsidy from the region Nouvelle Aquitaine. The project was to start at the end of 2016 but actually started in May 2017 (with the hiring of the European coordinator).

Financial report

The financial report shows a neutral balance for 2016 that becomes positive in 2017 with the first payment for the project « 2017 Year of Innovation for Rural Energy », and remains positive in 2018 with the second payment. Payments allow to reimburse the loan that was necessary to initiate the project.

A mistake on the table was corrected by Aline B. (treasurer) and a corrected report is sent out after the meeting. Remarks on the 2016 budget:

- Project « 100% RES Communities » sold out
- The membership fees did not quite reach expectations for 2016
- Costs related to bank services very high compared to the association activity -> new bank account in 2017 (may)
- The insurance was not used for the car incident and RURENER had to pay for reparation
- High cost of website hosting servicer (with no maintenance) -> new host and reacquaring of domain name in October 2017.

Perspectives:

- New European project to be submitted in 2018 (and 2019): SUDOE, H2020
- Engagement of RURENER of a Future Investment Program in France (application coordinated by French partner Macéo)
- Development of charged services for non-members rural territories to secure financial model

2017 Activities

Since May 2017, activities are back on track at RURENER with the implementation of a new communication plan (communication documents, new website, newsletter, social media) and the involvement of the network in local, national and European events on rural energy:

- o Meeting of the European Countryside Movement - Brussels
- o Napkorona Festival - Hungary/Ukraine/Slovenia/Romania
- o European Day for Sustainable Communities (Écolise and EESC) - Brussels, Belgium
- o TEPOS (Positive Energy Territories) national days (TEPOS network) – France

The project "2017, Year of Innovation for Rural Energy" started. The main goal of this project is to stimulate the attention of decision makers on rural energy at the European level by conducting a lot of actions for the energy transition in rural areas of France and Europe during the two-years project. This project has four components:

- Monitoring-evaluation of impacts of the energy strategies in rural communities. The goal is to give to local decision makers an appreciation of the socio, politico, economic and environmental impacts of their energy strategy at the territorial level, to offer guidelines for future choices and to communicate on their action with local population, colleagues and funders.

- Building cooperation projects with European partners. The goals are to allow rural territories to access European funds to develop innovative projects and stimulate mid and long-term actions for rural energy through the partnerships created.
- Structuring field study tours and making an inventory of the pilot territories for rural energy in Europe. The goals are to increase the appeal of rural areas with the creation of an “energy tourism”, and to facilitate the exchange of experiences and transfer of knowledge.
- Increase visibility of rural energy achievements at the European level by organizing a European event in Brussels with rural stakeholders and decision-makers and by taking part in other European events.



Presentations of experts

- *Etienne Viénot*, Auvergne Rhône Alpes Energie Environnement (French regional Agency of Energy and Environment): impact assessment for the energy transition and example of the European project CESBA-Alps (see ppt)
- *Vassiliki Kazana*, EMeTTech : European funding and Calls for projects in 2018 – *presentation canceled but ppt available.*
- *Gérard Peltre*, Rurality Environment Development and European Countryside Movement: European lobbying for rural development and the European Rural Agenda post 2020 (see ppt)

Perspectives

For the coming years, the priorities for the network are to reinforce its financial model (secure funding sources and members) and to extend the network to more countries in Europe. Two interns will join the team in 2018 to work on field study tours in Europe and European lobbying, and a case study of economic vulnerabilities and opportunities of the energy transition in rural territories and building of a European project.

The success of the current project (“2017 Year of Innovation for Rural Energy”) is necessary to maintain the network’s activities, strengthen and develop the network and gather information on rural territories committed to the energy transition.

The development of charged services will emerge from the actions developed in this project (monitoring evaluation of impact, building of cooperation project, field study tours, etc)

At the European level, RURENER is fully supporting RED/ ECM’s initiative to establish a European RURAL AGENDA for post 2020 in favor of an integrated sustainable development of rural territories in their diversity. This shared ambition raises three major stakes:

- *The recognition of rural territories as challenging areas for the EU*
- *The strengthening of rural-agricultural cooperation*
- *Responding to rural-urban imbalance through balanced exchanges between urban and rural poles of development and innovation*

The agenda also focuses on giving rural areas the right tools by supporting a strategic and financial approach of rurality with the development of a European InterFund for Rural Territories (details on www.ruraleurope.org).

Votes

- **Activity report 2016:** approve the content/accuracy of the document
Result: *unanimously approved* -> 7 present, 3 proxy-votes (quorum 4 people)
- **Financial report 2016:** approve the budget 2016
Result: *unanimously approved* -> 7 present, 3 proxy-votes (quorum 4 people)
- **Budget 2017**
Result: *unanimously approved* -> 7 present, 3 proxy-votes (quorum 4 people)

Field study tour and exchanges with locals

A field visit to the Troodos mountains is organized on Saturday with a local guide to give more information on the socio, economic and political context of the Republic of Cyprus.

Visits organized:

- Visit of an archeological site of Choirokoitia
- Visit of an anaerobic digestion plant from agricultural waste
- Visit of a winery with wine tasting

Lunch in Pelendri and meeting of local representatives

After the morning visits we arrived in the heart of the Troodos region in the village of Pelendri where we share a late lunch with local representatives and PESAP members. The pleasant atmosphere facilitates exchanges between participants and locals and the sharing of ideas and cultural traditions.

Back to the hotel and conclusions of the event

A positive energy came out of this event with new ideas for cooperation identified. The real work can begin.

Some suggestions for future meetings were formulated:

- Factual data on the hosting territory are very important in order to understand the context of the visits and local projects/strategies. Energy challenges are a way to address rural development and they must be put back in the local and national context for a good understanding.
- Exchanges between participants must be maintained and Skype calls will be organized in the following weeks
- A time dedicated to exchanges between participants and hosts would have been appreciated so participants also get to present their territories and local challenges which in turn facilitates the development of cooperation. Informal exchanges have been going on during the whole event and they must stay at the heart of this type of event.

Finally, the friendly environment of this event has been a key for success. This was made possible thanks to the quality of the hosts, of the participants, and the relevance of the activities and presentations. We can only thank everyone for making ENER'Cyprus 2017 such a success and we are looking forward to future cooperation and exchanges.

Free evening



Flights back to territories
