

# REPORT RURENER 2018 GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING

ENER'CREUSE



Co-organized by:



Jarnages, France

12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> of September 2018

## Introduction

In 2018, the Pays de Combraille en Marche, located in the Est of the Creuse department in France, is hosting RURENER General Assembly Meeting.

The Pays de Combraille en Marche is composed of two associations of municipalities: Creuse Confluence and Marche et Combraille en Aquitaine. It is described as an hyper-rural territory with an average of 17 inhabitants per square mile, a total of 30,000 inhabitants in 100 municipalities. The territory developed energy transition projects such as anaerobic digestion plants, solar PV, wind farms and biomass. Since 2017, Le Pays de Combraille en Marche is committed to a Positive Energy Territory (TEPOS) strategy that defines ambitious goals in terms of integrated development of the territory, using energy as a lever for rural development. For this reason, Combraille en Marche does not have specific quantitative goals on the future production of renewable energy, but rather a vision of mobilizing local expertise and creativity to design the positive energy rural territory of tomorrow.

During the three days of the event, we had a chance to learn about the territorial strategy, visit local projects and installations, meet local stakeholders and share convivial moments all together. Let's see in more details.

## Participants

- *Lou Ackermann*, intern at RURENER, France/Europe
- *Rogelio Bonilla*, Auvergne Rhône Alpes Energie Environnement, Lyon, France
- *Aline Brachet*, consultant APPIA-CAPACITY, France, RURENER treasurer
- *Philippe Cortès*, CEO of Granges Solaires, France, RURENER vice-president
- *Pierre Desarménien*, mayor of Rougnat, president of the association of communities Marche et Combraille en Aquitaine
- *Erwan Dubois*, energy technician/Leader PETR Centre Ouest Aveyron, France
- *Pablo Elixander*, advisor association Energies pour Demain
- *Enora Fillatre*, Commune Le Mené, Bretagne, France
- *Carme Freixa*, Mayor of Vallfogona, President of the Associacio de Micropobles de Catalunya, Spain
- *Roger Galland*, Vice mayor of Jarnages, France
- *János Hári*, deputy mayor of Nagypali, Hungary
- *Evangelos Karagiannis*, Prespes municipality, Greece
- *Vassiliki Kazana*, professor at Eastern Macedonia and Thrace Institute of Technology, Greece, RURENER secretary
- *Tibor Kócse*, Mayor of Nagypali, Hungary, President of RURENER
- *Florian Lougnon*, energy technician at Pays de Combraille en Marche, France
- *Eric Malatray*, director of the conurbation community Ouest Rhodanien
- *Sophie Moncorgé*, energy technician of the conurbation community Ouest Rhodanien
- *Ottó Nagy*, engineer (Nagypali, Hungary) and interpreter Hungarian/English
- *Paschalidis Panagiotis*, Mayor of Prespes municipality, Greece
- *Adrian Querejazu*, intern at RURENER, France/Europe
- *Céline Seince*, RURENER European Coordinator, France/Europe
- *Gérard Thomazon*, mayor of Bussière Saint Georges, France
- *Vincent Turpinat*, mayor of Jarnages, France, Association of communities Creuse Confluence
- *Konstantinos Zarmakoupis*, Prespes municipality, Greece

## Day 1

### Press conference

Opening of the event with a press conference with (left to right): Vincent Turpinat, mayor of Jarnages, Cécile Creuzon (Director of the Pays de Combraille en Marche), Tibor Kőcse (Mayor of Nagypali, Hungary, President of RURENER), Ottó Nagy (translator and engineer) and János Hári, (deputy mayor of Nagypali, Hungary).



### Presentation of the host territory: Pays de Combraille en Marche

Located in the central mountain range of France, Le Pays de Combraille en Marche is part of the Creuse department. It is composed of two associations of municipalities: Creuse Confluence and Marche et Combraille en Aquitaine. It is described as an hyper-rural territory with an average of 17 inhabitants per square mile, a total of 30,000 inhabitants in 100 municipalities. The territory developed energy transition projects such as anaerobic digestion plants, solar PV, wind farms and biomass. Since 2017, Le Pays de Combraille en Marche is committed to a Positive Energy Territory (TEPOS) strategy with ambitious goals for 2050.

The five pillars of the strategy are: the exemplariness of the public authorities (innovative projects and low consumptions); development of renewable energies (and use of waste energy from industries); mobility (linked to the hyper-rural character of the territory and source of energy insecurity); building of an inclusive energy strategy (participatory approach). The TEPOS strategy of Combraille en Marche promotes an integrated approach of energy centered on



local impact socio-economic and environmental impacts. This explains why they did not set a specific deadline to produce more renewable energy than they consume, as it could be reached easily with large wind farm projects built by external developers. One of the challenges of the Pays de Combraille en Marche's strategy is to involve citizens, to invite them to change their behaviors, in addition supporting local projects and SMEs.

One of the main projects of this strategy is the **Positive Energy Village**. The idea is to imagine how would the positive energy village of tomorrow look like. Mobility, circular economy, local production of renewable energy, renovation of buildings... All of these issues are raised. The first step was to invite students in architecture and design from the city to come to a small village of Creuse and draw recommendations on how to make the transition. Some ideas were extravagant, some rather curious and some others quite realistic. It will be an inspiration to be turned into concrete actions to really build the positive energy village.

We continue the discussions during a short walk in the village of Jarnages, guided by the vice-mayor, and through the dinner along with the discovery of local specialties.





## Day 2

### Morning visits

8h30 in the morning, we meet on the central place of the village of Jarnages where a bus is taking us on a tour of the territory. First stop: Parsac Rimondeix, where the Mayor François Riva explains the story of the local heat network. The story starts with the municipality, the association of communities and the Department that are all interested in making savings over heat expenses for public buildings in the municipality of Parsac Rimondeix (Town hall, junior high school, gym). After discussions between stakeholders, identification of funding opportunities and definition of the wood potential in the municipality, the heat network emerges. At the end of the story, a building built in wood with a roof covered in solar PV panels and a boiler that can supply the public buildings in heat all year (not counting sanitary hot water).



It is hard to leave Parsac as participants have their own experiences of heat network to share with the local representatives, but we manage to continue the tour towards the thermal town of Evaux-les-Bains.

In Evaux-les-Bains, we enjoy the charming thermal architecture on our way to the town hall where Bruno Papineau, the mayor, explains to us one of his latest projects to use the waste energy from thermal water to save energy and money, reinforce attractiveness and create jobs. A short visit of the thermal site follows for the group, except for the members of the Board of Directors that seize the occasion to have an in-person meeting.



## Break in Fontanières

### Afternoon visits and exchanges

There is no time for a nap after lunch and we get back on the bus to go to Rougnat for a visit of the spinning factory Fonty. Benoît De Larouzière, who is leading the visit, took up the factory in May 2017 when it was going down. His vision is to promote quality threads, lower the environmental impact of the spinning activity and preserve the traditional activity of spinning in this rural area of Creuse. But what does a spinning factory do exactly and how can it lower its environmental impact?

Before getting your wool ball ready to be knit, the wool has to get through a few steps as Benoît explains. And if you want to have a blue, red or green scarf to knit, there is one step that is absolutely necessary and quite energy demanding: the coloring. Getting the color into the fibers requires hot water (80°C) which leads to two challenges: how do we warm up the water for the coloring? And how do we cool down the water afterwards? In the Fonty factory, the warm water is reused in the next steps of the process. The colored water is then put into ponds where reeds are used as biologically filters to clean the water before it's poured back into the river. The question of how to get the water warm in the first place remains and Benoît wishes to work with the farmers of the area on a biogas digestion plant project that could produce electricity for the grid, and produce heat for the spinning factory (co-generation) and deal with agricultural wastes. Benoît has the vision of a sustainable future in which local stakeholders will collaborate to meet their needs and he is building the brand name of the Fonty factory on this approach.



### Exchanges between participants and locals

Before going to the final rendez-vous of the tour, we stop in the village of Auzances where the elected representatives of the Association of communities Creuse Confluence are waiting for us to share visions and projects. We do a round table, allowing everyone to present his/her

territory and 3 main projects. Common challenges appear such as mobility, energy insecurity, and the mobilization of territorial private companies.

## Inauguration of the *Slow Speed Hall*, Felletin

The *Slow Speed Hall* was named after the speed used by the trains in France when transporting merchandise at night, as opposed to High speed for transportation of people and medium speed for transportation of merchandise during the day. The *Slow Speed* refers to the time that we may want to take to live, when the world is moving faster than ever. It is Philippe Cortès, CEO of Granges Solaires (and vice-president of RURENER) that developed the project. His company bought the old merchandise hall of the train station, that had been ruined by a fire years ago, to the town facing financial difficulties and that could not renovate it. Granges Solaires, a small company that was born in 2008 in Peyrelevade, not far from Felletin is specialized in solar technology and particularly solar PV on rooftops. Even though the project had to deal with problems such as the junction to the electricity grid due to the large capacity of energy production thanks to the surface of the roof entirely covered with solar panels, it finally emerged and RURENER General Assembly was just the right timing to do the inauguration. A question remains, what are the inhabitants of Felletin going to do with this building? There is some work left but what is sure is that the building is self-sufficient in electricity to support small businesses and whatever is developed in the Hall should benefit to the social cohesion of the town and reinforce its attractiveness. The project was realized without any public subsidies, proof that intelligent public-private partnerships can go beyond financial aid and that the solar technology is mature enough to spread it on a large scale.

After tasting the local beer for the inauguration, we come back to Jarnages where a festive evening and local food buffet are waiting for us.





## Day 3

### RURENER General Assembly

Opening of the meeting by Tibor Köcse, President of RURENER who emphasized the importance of such meetings to get together and share experiences. He pointed out that 2017 was a very fruitful year with European events and activities that keep on growing. He thanks the RURENER team for the work done and is looking forward to what is coming next. Philippe Cortès, vice-president of RURENER gives a few words of introduction, starting by thanking the work done in 2017 and throughout 2018 and he highlights that RURENER needs its members to remain active and that the different communication channels that have been developed are there for the members to use, to feed with their own experiences.

Vassiliki Kazana, RURENER Secretary, continues the presentation with a summary of RURENER's main activities in 2017 at the local and European level. She starts by the networking activities that allowed to spread the network and meet new partners. Follows the description of the actions conducted in 2017 for communication purposes and conduct of the "2017 Year of Innovation for Rural Energy" project. Finally, an introduction of the events in which RURENER participated and/or organized and the lobbying strategy at the European level. For more details on RURENER 2017 activities, see the Activity report. Before giving the floor to Aline Brachet (RURENER Treasurer) for the financial report, Vassiliki reminds us that 2017 was a new start and that much more is to come in the following year, as 2018 is already demonstrating.

As shown in financial balance of 2017, the main sources of income are subsidies and membership fees (marginal) and the main expenses are linked to the conduct of the "2017 Year of Innovation for Rural Energy" project and reimbursement of the bank loan. The balance is slightly into deficit (-3 450,52€) in 2017. The previsions for 2018 are on the same line with a final balance expected at 0 thanks to the co-funding from experimentation territories of the "2017 Year of Innovation for Rural Energy" project. Aline highlights the need for RURENER to collect membership fees during the first semester of the year to avoid financial tensions.

In order to make it more concrete, Céline Seince, RURENER European coordinator and the two interns Lou Ackermann and Adrian Querejazu present the advancement of the "2017 Year of Innovation for Rural Energy" project and ongoing experimentations.

A final point is made on the updates of the Articles of association and internal rules and the introduction of RURENER new graphic charter (logo). We proceed to the vote of the resolutions that all approved unanimously before closing the session.



## Workshop

After spending a couple of days together, we identified common challenges and one of them is mobility. In rural areas, mobility is difficult to address and we start the workshop by identifying what is at stake with mobility. We continue by exchanging on local projects (successes and failures) to tackle the problem. Finally, we try to define what change do we want to achieve by addressing mobility challenges in order to put the first stone of a future project. The report of the workshop is available online ([www.rurener.eu/documents](http://www.rurener.eu/documents)).

## Signature of RURENER Charter by new members

Cécile Creuzon (center), President of Pays de Combraille en Marche and Paschalidis Panagiotis (left) are signing RURENER Charter to make official their membership to the network under the friendly eyes of Tibor Köcse (RURENER President).



Before saying goodbye, we all gather around a “fondue frites”, a local specialty served at the restaurant of Jarnages.

Thank you to all participants and more broadly to all RURENER members that are making the network every day... We hope to see you next year!