



SolarHub



"Energy Communities: Opportunities and synergies" *Workshop in the framework of the Excellence Hub "SolarHub"*

The Excellence Hub "SolarHub" — "A Greek-Turkish Solar Energy Excellence Hub to Advance European Green Deal" aims to strengthen the interconnections and scale up five (5) Greek and Turkish solar energy innovation ecosystems as a single, hybrid, cross-border, and interconnected Solar Energy Excellence Hub with an emphasis on agriculture applications.

Among nineteen **(19) partners** from Greece and Turkey and two (2) from Northern Europe, the **Centre for Research and Technology Hellas (CERTH)** has the crucial role of coordinating the Greek SolarHub ecosystem that consists of quadruple helix representatives. Member of the SolarHub partnership is also the **Social Cooperative Enterprise Electra Energy**, which since 2016 has been working on the transition to a democratic, sustainable energy system with a focus on citizens and local communities.

As part of the SolarHub project, CERTH, in collaboration with Electra Energy, held on Thursday, March 9th, a workshop on "**Energy Communities: Opportunities and synergies**", which took place at the headquarters of CERTH in Thessaloniki.

The workshop aimed to **analyse the model of Energy Communities** at its institutional and functional level and identify their potential in relation to the objectives of the SolarHub research project, creating an additional framework for building synergies.

Dr Dimitris Tzovaras, **Chairman** of the Board of Directors of CERTH, Dr. Spyridon Voutetakis, Director of the Chemical Process and Energy Resources Institute (CPERI) of CERTH and Mr Nikoloas Tzollas, Regional Advisor & President of the Development Organisation of the Region of Central Macedonia greeted the meeting., referring to the significant contribution of the Energy Communities and **the prospects of Greece as a green energy exporting country**.

Dr George Karagiannis, Chief Researcher of CERTH and coordinator of the Greek ecosystem of the project, gave a brief presentation on the Solar Hub project and referred, among other things, to the consortium, the project's vision and main objectives. Furthermore, he stressed that the project is a characteristic example of the implementation of the **quadrupole helix** model, i.e. the co-design of the energy scene through the interaction of research institutions with industry, the state and society.

Subsequently, Mr Dimitris Kitsikopoulos from the Social Cooperative Enterprise Electra Energy presented the Energy Communities' current national legal framework, possibilities, and challenges. He referred to the scope of their activities and presented successful examples of authentic Energy Communities in Greece. Finally, a detailed reference was made to the model of **self-consumption** through the application of **virtual net-metering**, providing concrete examples for understanding its legal and practical aspects.

In the 3rd part of the workshop, a round table discussion was held in which the following speakers participated:

- Valantis Ketikidis, CERTH scientific associate, representative of the Excellence Hub Coalition
- Dimitris Kitsikopoulos, representative of the Social Cooperative Enterprise Electra Energy
- Nikos Kanopoulos, CEO of BRITE Solar
- Konstantinos Tertivanidis, Director of the Regional Development Fund (RDF) of Central Macedonia
- Stelios Theodoulides, General Director of the cooperative company Venus Growers



The event is funded by the European Commission and the Horizon Europe Research Framework Programme, under contract No 101086110 (SolarHub).



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The discussion was moderated by Mr Odysseas Spyroglou, from International Development Ireland (IDI) and partner of the SolarHub project. During the discussion, **financial instruments** of the Regional Development Fund (RDF) of Central Macedonia were mentioned that could support the creation and implementation of Energy Communities. In addition, the opportunities presented to agricultural cooperative enterprises to exploit agro photovoltaics technology (**agroPVs**) through Energy Communities were highlighted, while issues such as limited network capacity in Greece were discussed.

During the discussion, Mr O. Spyroglou relayed the questions from the audience to the speakers. Questions were raised, among others, about the familiarisation of citizens with the model of the Energy Communities, the possibility of participating — either as natural or legal persons — in an Energy Community, as well as the changes introduced by the **new legal framework of Energy Communities**, which is expected to be defined within the next days.

The results of the workshop, among others, were to inform the attendees about the model of the Energy Communities, as well as to widen further synergies, creating an additional potential framework for the **application of the results of the SolarHub project**.

The workshop was attended in person by representatives of local government from the Municipalities of Thessaloniki, Themi, Pavlos Melas, Lagadas, Kavala, Preveza, development organisations for local authorities, such as the Major Development Agency Thessaloniki S.A. and Anatoliki S.A., innovative companies such as Thema Renewable Energy, as well as representatives of relevant research projects, such as FoodScaleHub, which coordinates the Carbonica Hub for a climate-resilient agriculture and Q-plan International, which together with CERTH participate in the BeCoop project.



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