



03/2011

NEWSLETTER

TO THE READER

Welcome to the fifth edition of the RURENER newsletter! This is the last one during the project lifetime and again 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 around the network.

The focus of this edition are success stories, achievements and last „official“ activities of the RURENER network. But you will also read about how it is going on after the project lifetime, meaning the IEE funding period! And it is going on, because it is growing, an association was founded and a new project is going to be launched. But please find out more about in on the following pages.

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@rurenener.eu.

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Focus: Final conference in Nagypáli set the first step into the future!

From 26th to 28th of September 2011 the project's final conference with all partners and mayors of the network communities took place in Hungarian pilot community – Nagypáli.

All partners in the network and about 25 mayors of communities in France, Greece, Germany, Italy, Spain and Romania came to visit the region. The agenda of the event contained an intensive working program for the RURENER partners. Fieldtrips, visits and the European Conference on 26th of September gave many opportunities to gain and discuss impressions as well as exchange experiences on local development strategies for the use of renewable energy, reducing energy consumption and also about the future of the RURENER network.



The most important aim of the meeting to strengthen the network and prepare it for the future. So the highlights of the conference have been first of all the attendance of new communities from France, Germany, Romania, Greece and Italy as well as a whole bunch of hungarian communities who came to become members, signed twinning agreements between two communities each and the constitutive general assembly for the new founded RURENER association.



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37 communities, institutions or individuals are founding members. The association aims to: Set-in network, promote and support European small rural communities committed to an integrated energy policy at local level, aiming to reach energy neutrality.

After being elected as the first president Jacky Aignel, mayor of Saint Goueno (FR), he said:

First of all, I'd like to thank our Hungarian friends for the organisation of those 3 days. We came from our rural communities to build the big cities a century ago. Today, our territories have the same capacity concerning energy, but it is also the opportunity to develop our own areas thanks to energy.

I could see during these 3 days the willingness of each member from each country to put together their projects and activities. I am convinced that all our resources and assets will support the future generations. I've accepted this presidency in the aim of structuring our initiatives, convinced by the legitimacy of bottom-up local development. As we say in Brittany, the pot always starts boiling from the bottom!

RURENER

Network of small rural
communities for
energetic-neutrality
www.rurener.eu
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RURENER CHARTER

RURENER is a European network of small rural communities committed to an integrated energy policy at local level, aiming to reach energy-neutrality. The members are small rural communities and structures supporting them throughout Europe. They have signed the RURENER charter and are members of the RURENER Association.

PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

1. Members agree on a **sustainable way of developing energy strategies at local level**, taking into account climate change, rarefaction of fossil sources, social and territorial cohesion at European level, economic development, and local positive impact at the community level.
2. Members are aware that they **share substantial assets in rural areas**, both in terms of renewable energy sources and capacity to apply a rational use of energy on the first hand, and in terms of agriculture, forestry, culture, leisure, for **people living both in rural and urban areas**.
3. Members **value integrity**, which creates an environment of **mutual trust and respect**. Members demonstrate a flexible approach and **openness to new ways of thinking**.
4. Between members of the association will not be tolerated any discrimination in terms of culture, nationality, political, ethnic or religious differences;
5. Members **value learning** and are willing to develop expertise, either working alone or in partnership with other members, for the benefit of all network members.
6. Members work responsibly and independently, with the support of the network, and aim to be successful in **reaching their own objectives**. They ensure they will not carry any activity or behaviour causing a conflict of interest with other members or the association.
7. RURENER members will promote accuracy, honesty and good faith in association activities; they will not participate in activities that can cause damages to the image of the association.

ACTIVITIES ON ENERGY ISSUES IN RURAL AREAS

- a. **Experience Sharing**: Build capacity thanks to expertise/experience of others (on funding, technical, organisational), RURENER tools and the Knowledge Bank.
- b. **Cooperation**: Start new projects between members and at the network level in the name and for the benefit of the members.
- c. **Territorial marketing**: Use the RURENER name to raise the profile of members.
- d. **Information and reporting**: disseminate data and analysis about results and impacts in the field to support decision-makers at European level.
- e. **Representation**: Lobbying at European level to represent communities and their needs; provide an alternative vision at the interface of economics and environment.
- f. **Funding research**: Relationship with other networks, private and public organisations to support the activities and management of the RURENER Network through sponsorship or subsidies.

As the representative of a small rural community in Europe, I approve the above mentioned principles and values and I want my community to be part of the RURENER Network in order to participate in and benefit from the above mentioned activities.

Name of the Community: _____ Country: _____

Done in: _____ On the: __/__/__

Name and position of the signatory: _____

Signature: _____

[http://rurener.eu/2011/10/13/
new-rurener-association-founded/](http://rurener.eu/2011/10/13/new-rurener-association-founded/)



RURENER in Brussels: A strong role to play!

Our activities of communication towards European institutions have started step by step in the end of 2010. As our meetings always happen in almost remote rural areas, it has not been easy to get Brussels come to us. So we decided to go to Brussels!

In December 2010, we met officers from DG agriculture and rural development and from DG energy. Our objectives were to tell to the first of them what was happening in rural areas in the energy topics and to the other one that many things about energy was happening in rural areas. What we learnt then is that both of them have identified the need to build bridges between the two policies: How far CAP is concerned and used in local energy policies in rural areas? How far are rural communities connected to urban areas in terms of energy supply?

Next step was to talk at the European Parliament about our activities. We were invited by the FREE initiative in February 2011 to speak in front of 40 members of Parliament. Talking about what we do means talking about what communities are doing. Through examples coming from Peyrelevade, Slanic, Nikiforos, Wesendorf, and many others, we have shown to a very attentive public the concrete needs we face: bottom-up governance; time to build activities that have a real local impact; coherence between local, regional, national and European levels in terms of programmes and frames ... are the main issues tackled during these 12 minutes! And more than 10 persons were coming to us at the end to know more about those very concrete practical feedbacks from the field.

Still with FREE initiative and many other projects dealing

with energy and rural (we've invited all of them to participate in a small fair), RURENER has gathered 80 persons at the committee of the regions in April 2011 during the Sustainable Energy Week. Around the table were sitting representatives of the DG energy, of the DG agriculture and rural development (in charge of drawing the new CAP), of the EU Parliament and of the Committee of the Regions to talk again about rural energy. The necessity of a bridge between energy and rural in the European policies were once more illustrated. Even though, according to us, people in the room had not enough space to talk about their activities answering to this issue, this was a founding initiative for RURENER and the opportunity to be identified as one of the organisation that are well placed to fill in this gap and improve the future.

One of the Members of Parliament, Lambert van Nistelrooij, invited us to the annual Europe Day in Diessen, on September 16/17. It was all about "information and knowledge for energy related initiatives in rural environments". We got the chance to promote our network in the Netherlands.

The last step during the project lifetime, but definitely not of RURENER will happen at the Covenant of Mayors on the 29th of November 2011. During this big official event in Brussels, we will communicate on the importance of small rural communities in the objectives of the Covenant of Mayors, representing all the small rural communities, too small and fragile to be signatories of the Covenant, but strong and big enough to play a real role in the field! The participation of RURENER as a member of the Covenant of Mayors will open the road to more collaboration between urban and rural and more communication on what is happening in rural communities: so much more than producing renewable energy!

Tirano, well done! (IT)

During a training module held in Chiuro on 17/11 within the AS Project AlpHouse dealing with alpine buildings energy sustainability, Tirano was invited to talk about its own experience. Paolo Clementi explained to his colleagues from some municipalities in Sondrio some goals achieved by Tirano, reporting in particular on themes related to RURENER and LAP objectives:

2008 Public buildings Energy Audits, with some obvious result (the buildings 'envelop' is often not performing) but with some useful conclusion: the consumption is highly related to people's behaviour, be careful about it!

2007-2011 PV plants installed on two schools roofs: no soil consumption and clear indication of energy production in order to inform citizens about results!

2010-2011 involvement in Covenant of Mayors and participation to CARIPLO Tender for medium-small communities' energy sustainability.

2011 finalization of Urban Planning Tool with rules and incentives for actions improving energy performance and sustainability, in particular:

- a) at least energy class B mandatory for new buildings
- b) for new or renovated buildings achieving energy class A allowed 10% volume dimension bonus
- c) cycle network improvement

Ongoing: new Building Code, stressing the point of building sustainability aiming to improve environmental quality and energy&resources saving through:

- Ecologic and local raw materials
- Attention to life cycle assessment
- Rules for solar collectors, PV plants (no on-soil installation, slag disposal) and heat pumps (no residual water drainage to sewage system)
- Intelligent water and waste management
- Acoustic insulation

Straight ahead towards energy and resources saving, act sustainable, protect environment and improve life quality!



In the picture: Paolo Clementi, from Tirano technical office, is presenting the municipality activities during the qualification module held within Alpine Space AlpHouse project.

A RURENER contest in the high school of Nikiforos Dramas (EE)

The RURENER technical advisory team of the TEI KAVALLAS Forestry Department in Drama in collaboration with the high school of Nikiforos Dramas organized a prize winning poster contest between its students titled "My energy neutral rural community". The main purpose of the contest was to increase the students' awareness on energy saving and use of renewable energy sources issues and make them familiar with the concept of energy neutrality. Thirty seven students in 9 groups took part in the contest.



All were very enthusiastic and spent many hours after their classes under the supervision of their equally enthusiastic teachers to search information and generate ideas for their posters to show how their rural community should function as an energy rural community!

The result was astonishing! All the posters had a good coverage of the topic, conveyed well the concept of the energy neutral rural community and were from the artistic point of view very nicely presented. The work of the evaluation committee consisting of two members of the TEI KAVALAS RURENER technical advisory team, two school teachers and one Municipality representative was hard. However, through an established evaluation procedure three teams were finally selected as the winners of the contest. Money prizes of 300, 200 and 100 Euros were awarded by the mayor of the Municipality Mr. Nikolaos Kagiaoglou to each of the three winning teams in a nice ceremony during the energy day organized by the TEI KAVALAS RURENER team in Nikiforos Dramas on November 18, 2011. All the posters were displayed during the energy day and all the students who took part in the contest were awarded specially designed with the RURENER logo participation certificates.



Between us

New project

RURENER association will be partner in a new IEE project. „Towards 100% RES rural communities“ is the name and the objective of the project, which is currently in the negotiation phase with the EACI. It is based on RURENER, the RES Champions League and other successful national initiatives. „100% RES communities“ cover their energy demand entirely with renewable energies, are based on very high levels of energy efficiency and include the territorial renewable potentials comprehensively. The ambition of this model is to turn a global constraint into a powerful lever of local development, job creation and reversing of population decline.

So keep the fingers crossed for „100 RES communities“!

Newcomers

We welcome several new members in RURENER: In Italy Consorzio del Comprensorio Opitergino (Consortium of the Opitergino District) signed the RURENER charter and has committed to energy neutrality! Consorzio del Comprensorio Opitergino is an association of the public bodies founded in 1969 with the aim to represent small and medium sized communities present in the Opitergino territory and support their economic and social development. In total 12 communities take part of the Consortium.

In addition GAL Terre di Marca joined RURENER. GAL Terre di Marca is a public-private society born in the frame of the EU initiative LEADER in order to manage Local Development Programme and in particular mode rural communities. GAL Terre di Marca associates 14 municipalities (among other organizations).

In Hungary following 12 new communities could be obtained for the Network: Egervár, Egyházaskér, Gősfő, Karmacs, Kerkaszentkirály, Kispáli, Pethőhenye, Sármellék, Szentgyörgyvár, Vasboldogasszony, Zalaszentiván, Zalavár.

But RURENER is still looking for new members. There will always be the need for exchange of experiences, sharing know-how and learning from each other. If you are on your way to energetic neutrality or if you want to make the first step, don't hesitate to contact either one of the project partners directly or info@rurenener.eu

New look

The project web site got a make over. Please take a look at: www.rurenener.eu. We hope you like it!

In brief

IEE INFORMATION DAY

How can you take part in the IEE programme?

The European Info Day 2012 on 24th January in Brussels gives you an update on the European policy for renewable energies and energy efficiency, presents you the Intelligent Energy-Europe (IEE) programme and the priorities of its 2012 call for project proposals, presents ongoing IEE projects and the ingredients of their success, tells you how to apply for IEE funding and gives the best chance for your project to be selected, offers dedicated workshops for each funding area with the opportunity to meet the IEE team of the EACI, organises bi-lateral meetings with IEE project officers to give you the opportunity to discuss your project or a specific question related to the 2012 IEE call and it is an opportunity to network and find project partners. For more information: http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/events/2012/european-info-day_en.htm

Zoom on

INTERVIEW WITH JACKY AIGNEL, MAYOR OF SAINT GOUËNO (FR) AND FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE RURENER ASSOCIATION



WHY ARE YOU JOINING THE PROJECT?

I feel it is a necessity not to stay alone in those new projects. The risk is to put ourselves on the fringe. The network represents strength for making information accessible for the general public and for coaxing.

HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE ENERGETIC NEUTRALITY?

According to me, energy neutrality is to produce what I consume while avoiding at the same time to increase my consumption. The objective of this neutrality is to consume less in the end.

WHAT ARE THE DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES/POTENTIALS FOR YOUR REGION?

The first projects we have built on the territories have made the proof that we can develop and multiply such initiatives.

I also feel that these projects represent a pillar on top of which new opportunities will come along (such as production of hydrogen from electricity produced by wind farms – forecasted for 2011 – 2012)

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW FROM THE OTHER COMMUNITIES OF THE RURENER NETWORK?

Issues existing in each community should help us to build one or several models of action plan, roadmaps, slots, on which we could better build our projects. It should also help to know better each other. Furthermore, collective thinking should facilitate the achievement of individual objectives.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST PROBLEM/CHALLENGE ON THE WAY TO ENERGETIC NEUTRALITY?

According to me, the biggest challenge will be to make the population accept these changes in energy supply. The best way to achieve this will pass through pragmatism: realise projects and show that it works (making something accessible to the general public through observation and demonstration is the best transversal communication!)

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT FROM THE EUROPEAN ENERGY POLICY MADE IN BRUSSELS?

Personally, I'd like that local stakeholders are more implicated in building those policies. I argue in favour of bottom-up development. It sounds difficult to me that a policy could be adaptable in all of our European communities. Standardisation in these issues is doomed to failure. Diversity will come to be a better counsellor.

DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR THE RURENER NETWORK?

Our network will work well if one doesn't count on others, but count with others. When well organised and full of willingness, minorities can build big projects.



Saint Gouëno

Imprint

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