

# La Démocratie de l'Énergie en Europe

## Energy Democracy in Europe

## Energiedemokratie in Europa

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## 1 the idea of Energy Democracy

“Energy Democracy means the ability to make key decisions on the transition towards renewable energy in common, free from predominant profit interests.”

(The Climate Alliance Osnabrück)

“Energy democracy means that everybody is ensured access to sufficient energy.

Energy production must thereby neither pollute the environment nor harm people.

More concretely, this means that fossil fuel resources must be left in the ground, the means of production need to be socialised and democratised, and that we must rethink our overall attitude towards energy consumption.”

(Klima Allianz AusgeCO2hlt 2012, Lausitz-Camp 2012, Gegenstrom Berlin)

## 1 Criteria to measure Energy Democracy

- participation / democracy
- ownership / control
- value-creation/employment
- ecology/sufficiency/de-growth

## 2 best practice findings

### main types

- » new energy cooperatives
- » town-level public projects
- » micro-projects
- » Scottish model?



## 2 best practice findings

### typology of countries

- a) high production / many ED
- b) high production / few ED
- c) low production / many ED

» The Energy Transition is a technical project.

» Energy-Democracy goes well beyond that.

» Who's energy-transition?

	Countries with numerous emancipatory projects (more than 5)	Countries with some emancipatory projects (more than 1)	Countries with one or zero emancipatory project (up to 1)
High share of energy produced from renewable sources (at least 10 %)	Denmark (23 %), Germany (12 %), Italy (12 %)	Sweden (46 %), Finland (32 %), Austria (31 %), Spain (15 %), France (12 %)	Latvia (33 %), Portugal (25 %), Estonia (26 %), Romania (21 %), Lithuania (20 %), Slovenia (19 %), Bulgaria (14%), Slovakia (10 %), Greece (12 %), Poland (10 %)
Medium share of energy produced from renewable sources (5-10 %)			Czech Republic (9.4 %), Hungary (8 %), Ireland (6.7 %)
Low share of energy produced from renewable sources (less than 5 %)	The Netherlands (4 %), UK (4 %)	Belgium (4 %)	

**Table 1:** Countries according to the share of renewable energy in total energy consumption (in brackets) and number of emancipatory energy projects. Percentage rates for all countries for 2011 (Eurostat 2013, IRENA 2014). The value given for Belgium is an estimate by Eurostat. Malta, Luxembourg and Cyprus were not included in the study.

## 3 Our Empirical Concept

- 1) Democratic Energy Projects have an agenda of political aspirations which go beyond the mere generation of electricity or heat.
- 2) These political aspirations typically comprise at least one of the following: an overall reduction of per-person energy consumption, social justice and the empowerment of the disadvantaged or other goals of a thorough socio-ecological transformation.
- 3) An organisational structure that emphasises participation and is collective, not private, in character: collective legal ownership, a collective benefit allocation mechanism and collective decision making.”
- 4) The political aspirations of democratic energy transitions makes them distinct from primarily profit-oriented organisations. They are not necessarily non-profit organisations, but at a minimum not-only-for-profit organisations.

(cf. Becker/Kunze, Collective Ownership in Renewable Energy and Chances for Degrowth, in review process)

## Why Democracy, why collectivity?

- private enterprises are only-for-profit
- de-growth, participation, social justice, 100% shift to renewables are not compatible with profit-maximisation
- non-profit goals are possible only in political and collective enterprises
  
- The atmosphere is a collective good
- The electricity network can only operate well in a collective fashion
- the benefits and damages of energy production are shared collectively in present and future

## 4 Key Findings of Survey

- universe of a thousand alternatives across Western Europe
- also exist in hostile policy environments, but prosper with state support
  - catch-up development in Southern Europe
  - different juridical forms but similar goals
    - two types of co-operatives
    - social tariffs often a goal
    - de-growth often a goal



## 4 Trends of last decade

- growth well beyond the local scale
- formalisation of early grass-roots
- catch-up development in Southern Europe
- transition from countryside to cities
- Europeanisation: learning from examples

## **4 Main reason for Success: feed-in-tariffs**

1980s early wind-power cooperatives in Denmark and the Netherlands

1990s liberalisation of electricity markets in EU, more cooperatives

2000s strong feed-in-tariffs in many countries, maturation of technology, boom of local energy initiatives in Western Europe

2013/14 backlash on feed-in-tariffs in Spain and Germany

## 4 Possible Futures

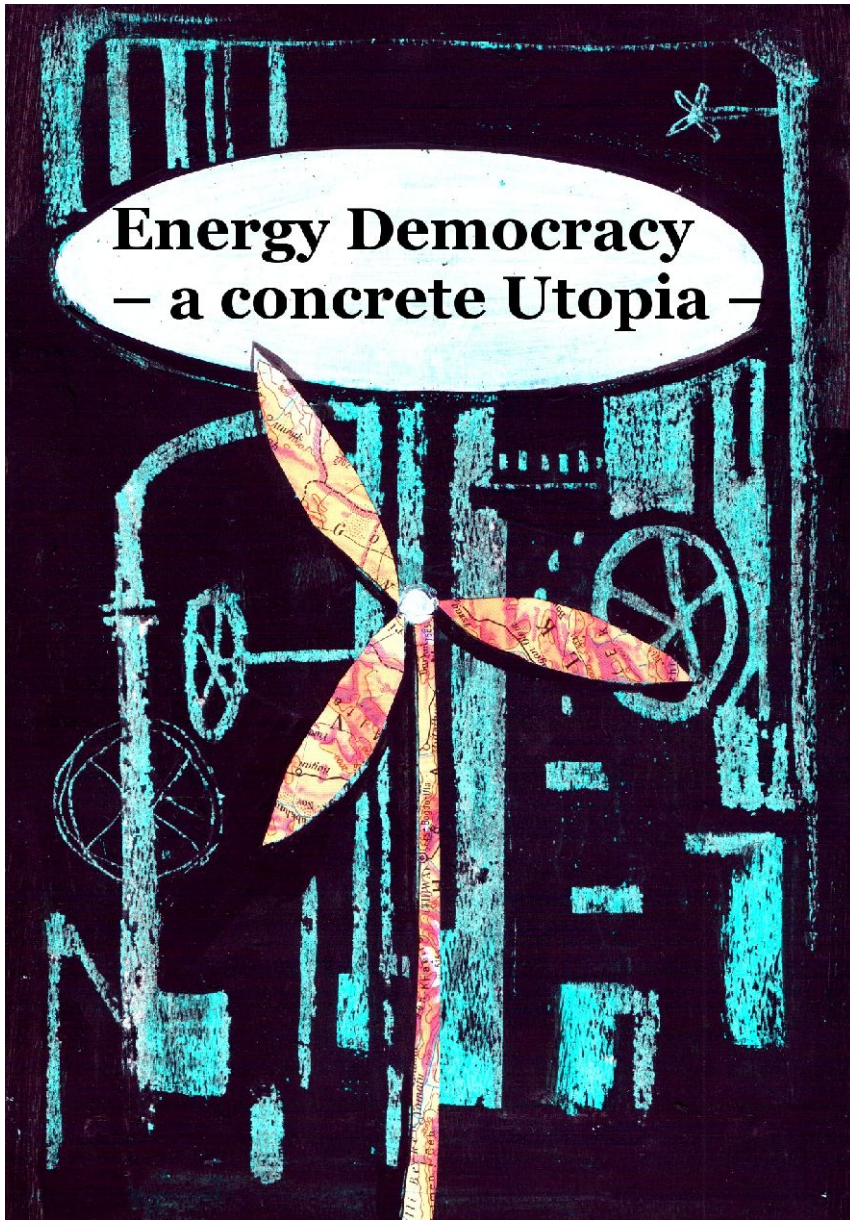
- Democratic Energy Projects only mainstream in Denmark and Germany.

What to do? How to leave the niches?

- New type of social-ecological energy utilities in German cities
  - Scottish Model

## 5 possible futures

- 1) business as usual: further niche development, few leading countries
- 2) ban of feed-in-tariffs by EU Commission: slower energy-transition without democratic element
- 3) New EU 2030 energy and climate targets in 2015:  
return of nuclear, fracking and coal, backlash on energy-transition.  
or: strong targets for renewables and Co2 reduction
- 4) Support of state Institutions: Scottish Model and German Utilities
- 5) Alliance of anti-fossil-energy movement with Energy-Democracy



» Energy Democracy exists!

» Making ED a general paradigm of the energy-economy is an Utopia.

“The concrete Utopia is the possibility-content of the real, i.e. the possibility to change the course of actions as a mediation of Utopia and the real tendency of history.”

Ernst Bloch (1967)