

The communication on the Energy Union: where is the role for citizens and local actors?

Brussels, 25 February 2015. Today, the European Commission has officially published a Communication on the goal of a resilient Energy Union with an ambitious climate policy, providing consumers with secure, sustainable, competitive and affordable energy. But where is the role for citizens and local actors in the transition to a more decentralised energy system ?

CEDEC very much subscribes to this milestone project that outlines a vision of the European energy sector of the future that is strong, sustainable and innovative. The European Commission envisages energy and climate policies, supported by all Member States in the spirit of solidarity and setting the framework for a transition to a sustainable energy supply in Europe at affordable prices for citizens.

However, while the European Commission also promotes a vision of the Energy Union “with citizens at its core”, the communication then falls short of addressing in detail the role citizens and local actors, such as local energy companies, play today in Europe’s energy system and addressing this role with targeted actions.

The transition towards a more decentralised and sustainable system has already encouraged many citizens to become actively involved in their energy supply, through self-generation, efficient energy consumption, formation of cooperatives for renewable energy generation, etc.

“We regret to see that citizens and local actors are only marginally addressed in the Communication. Citizen’s energy projects, local energy companies and distributed generation facilitated by distribution system operators are a reality today and at the centre of a transforming energy sector. We hope that the translation of these guidelines into a practical roadmap will enhance the presence of the above-mentioned local players and define specific actions for DSOs and local utilities,” said **Gert de Block, Secretary General of CEDEC**.

CEDEC Background information

CEDEC represents the interests of 1500 local and regional energy companies serving 85 million electricity and gas customers and connections, with a total turnover of €120 billion and with more than 350.000 employees. These predominantly medium-sized local and regional energy companies have developed activities as electricity and heat generators, electricity and gas distribution grid and metering operators and energy (services) suppliers. The wide range of services provided by local utility companies is reliable, sustainable and close to the customer. Through their investments and local jobs, they make a significant contribution to local and regional economic development.