

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

COMETS Project Launch: European- wide project coordinated by the University of Turin to study and promote the role of citizens in the energy transition

May 22, 2019

How to create social innovation while participating in the energy transition? The COMETS project will fill the knowledge and participation gaps that characterize the process of the energy transition to renewables.

COMETS (Collective Action Models for the Energy Transition and Social Innovation) is a 3 million-euro project funded through the European Union's Horizon 2020 programme. It is a three-year project, launched on May 1, 2019 and is coordinated by the University of Turin (Italy).

The energy transition is the process of transforming the current energy system based on fossil energy sources to an energy system that is based on renewable sources. For this process to be further advanced, citizens must be recognized and given a central role.

COMETS is focused on the study of Collective Action Initiatives (CAIs) as forms of coordination mainly composed by citizens in the production, distribution and purchase of energy. Examples of CAIs in the energy sector include energy cooperatives, renewable energy communities and energy purchasing groups.

COMETS will explore quantitatively and qualitatively the reasons, potential, objectives and barriers to the development of CAIs, as well as their contribution to the energy transition at European and national levels. Information gathered during the project will help to co-design and test support tools together with the participants in CAIs, as well as the political and scientific community. COMETS is expected to allow all these actors to understand, promote and facilitate the mobilization of civil society, as well as guarantee the acceptance and participation in the transition process.

COMETS has four main objectives: strengthen the role of citizens as energy producers and consumers; support the diffusion of CAIs throughout Europe by exploring the regulatory, financial, political, cultural and technical contexts of different countries; provide policy makers with useful and innovative knowledge on the functioning of CAIs in the energy sector; explore the potential of CAIs for their widespread presence in the energy market.

COMETS will be developed along a research path that is structured in three successive steps: a collection of general information at the European level (Inventory), an in-depth investigation through a questionnaire (Survey), and a focus on cases of particularly interesting and innovative initiatives (Case Studies).

COMETS is being implemented by the participation of 12 partners, composed of 8 academic and research institutions from Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland and Spain, as well as 3 EU-level networks. This interdisciplinary consortium will provide valuable support to achieving the project's goals.

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