

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002388/24
to the Commission
Emmanouil Fragkos (ECR), Galato Alexandraki (ECR)
(3 November 2024)**

Subject: Involvement of local communities in decisions on energy projects

There is deep public concern in Greece about the energy projects being implemented in the Greek territory, as it is becoming evident that there is a lack of consultation with local authorities, and overall planning is inadequate.

The absence of detailed research and the failure to develop an integrated, long-term framework reinforce the suspicion that progress on the 'energy transition' in Greece is self-interested, casual and opportunistic in nature, giving the erroneous impression that Greece's energy role in relation to Europe is being upgraded, but without bringing any effective or strategic benefits for local communities.

Unfortunately, the EU also bears some responsibility in that it has not specified a strategy for energy that clearly ensures there is a balance between European and national interests, not to mention the fact that there is a high minimum benefit threshold for local communities.

Increased transparency and greater local community involvement are crucial when it comes to formulating a fair and coherent energy policy in Greece.

In view of the above, can the Commission answer the following:

1. What is being done to ensure that energy investments in the Member States are in line with the needs of local communities and that, in terms of sustainability and long-term performance, they are developed for the benefit of those communities and of the nation as a whole?
2. What measures does it plan to adopt to ensure that local authorities are effectively involved in the planning and implementation of energy projects in Greece?
3. How will actions to promote transparency and accountability be supported in environmental and social studies on energy infrastructure projects?

Submitted: 3.11.2024

**Answer given by Mr Jørgensen on behalf of the European Commission
(27 February 2025)**

The EU legislative framework on energy is designed to create a resilient Energy Union, which gives consumers, including households and businesses, access to secure sustainable and affordable energy, and to attract investments. This can only be achieved through coordinated action at EU, regional, national and local level.

The Renewable Energy Directive (EU) 2023/2413 ⁽¹⁾, for example, requires Member States to identify the impacts on the public when designating areas to accelerate the deployment of renewables and ensure public participation. Furthermore, the directive strengthens direct and indirect participation of local communities in renewable energy projects.

Direct participation is established energy communities and citizen energy communities ⁽²⁾. Where plans or programmes in the energy sector are subject to environmental assessments ⁽³⁾, Member States need to ensure public consultation and participation before approving any decisions on such plans, programmes.

The Commission supports local authorities via the Covenant of Mayors ⁽⁴⁾ and the Smart Cities Marketplace ⁽⁵⁾, which provide platforms to engage cities to design plans, explore solutions, shape projects through technical assistance, and facilitate financing deals for their implementation.

Member States can seek specific support, including on promoting transparency and accountability of environmental or social impact assessments, under the Technical Support Instrument flagship initiative ⁽⁶⁾, which also offers support on citizen participation in renewable energy projects.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2023/2413/oj>

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32019L0944>

⁽³⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2001/42/oj> and <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2011/92/2014-05-15>

⁽⁴⁾ <https://eu-mayors.ec.europa.eu/en/home>

⁽⁵⁾ <https://smart-cities-marketplace.ec.europa.eu/>

⁽⁶⁾ https://reform-support.ec.europa.eu/our-projects/flagship-technical-support-projects_en

The President of the Commission tasked the Commissioner for Energy and Housing to develop a Citizens Energy Package to increase citizens' participation in the energy transition.
