



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 30.4.2026
C(2026) 2850 final

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

of 30.4.2026

**on supporting the development of energy communities and maximising the potential of
self-consumption**

{SWD(2026) 126 final}

Efficiency Directive (EU) 2023/1791 asks local authorities of a population higher than 45 000 to assess the role of energy communities in local heating and cooling plans.

- (4) The EU framework emphasises fairness and inclusiveness. Both the *Regulation (EU) 2023/955 of the European Parliament and of the Council*⁵ and the *Commission Recommendation (EU) 2023/2407*⁶ recognise the potential of energy communities and self-consumption schemes, such as energy sharing, to contribute to protecting vulnerable households and households affected by energy poverty. Member States should therefore encourage the inclusion of people, including vulnerable households, households affected by energy poverty and households with persons with disabilities in energy communities and renewable energy projects.
- (5) Well-designed enabling frameworks for energy communities, individual self-consumption and energy sharing can support realisation of Principle 20 of the European Pillar of Social Rights, which affirms the right of everyone to access essential services of good quality, including energy.
- (6) The *affordable energy action plan*⁷, presented by the Commission on 26 February 2025, sets out the objective of making energy affordable, accelerating the deployment of renewable energy, and reducing the Union's dependence on fossil fuels and energy imports. It also contributes to the objectives of the *Clean Industrial Deal*⁸ by strengthening local investment, competitiveness and social fairness through simplified, predictable and transparent frameworks. To achieve these objectives, the *Citizens' Energy Package*⁹ aims to further increase the participation of citizens and communities in the energy transition, and empower them to produce, store, consume, share or sell their own renewable energy to attain stable access to affordable energy prices.
- (7) Due to their reliance on engagement and often voluntary work by the public, energy communities face distinct constraints in terms of technical capacity, time, and finances that impact the project development cycle as well as the route to energy markets. It is especially challenging for energy communities to mobilise financing at early stages of project development, manage complex administrative procedures, invest in technical infrastructure, or conduct market operations¹⁰.
- (8) To help overcome these constraints and facilitate equal development across the Union, energy communities should be enabled to emerge, diversify and grow, ensuring clear and coherent frameworks, general awareness and fair treatment, minimising regulatory and administrative barriers in all relevant energy markets and sectors, and providing

⁵ Regulation (EU) 2023/955 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 2023 establishing a Social Climate Fund and amending Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 (PE/11/2023/REV/1 ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/955/oj>).

⁶ Commission Recommendation (EU) 2023/2407 of 20 October 2023 on energy poverty (C/2023/4080 ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reco/2023/2407/oj>).

⁷ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Action Plan for Affordable Energy Unlocking the true value of our Energy Union to secure affordable, efficient and clean energy for all Europeans (COM(2025) 79 final) Brussels, 26.2.2025.

⁸ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. The Clean Industrial Deal: A joint roadmap for competitiveness and decarbonisation (COM/2025/85 final).

⁹ COM/2026/115 final

¹⁰ See recommendations n° 9 and 10 of the Citizens Panel on Energy Efficiency, [Energy Efficiency Panel - Citizens' Engagement Platform](#).

guidance for technical and financial aspects as well as eased access to finance. Support for capacity building can further boost the professionalisation and autonomy of energy communities and technical tools for their design is fundamental for the overall uptake of energy communities. Support for local authorities and particularly secondary structures or federations of energy communities can be an effective means of accelerating their development and capacity to engage in projects that are more resource-intensive socially and technologically innovative.

- (9) Self-consumption of renewable energy faces its own distinct barriers within financing, permitting, grid access and administrative complexity. These barriers disproportionately affect low-income households and small consumers. To ensure inclusiveness, the following are essential: simplification; integration of single points of contact for permitting and one-stop shops; targeted financial support; and third-party financing or collective financing approaches such as leasing, energy-performance contracts or community investment schemes. A coherent approach to energy communities and energy sharing across the Union will help sharing of best practice and deployment of innovative business models across borders. Common principles for definitions, remuneration, grid integration and consumer protection help deliver such a coherent approach.
- (10) Proportionate and non-discriminatory treatment and tailored assistance in grid connection procedures and applications make it easier to access the grids of RES production installations.
- (11) Energy sharing when coupled with demand response, load shifting or energy storage can deliver cost savings for both consumers and energy systems. This requires access to metering and consumption data and data interoperability.
- (12) In line with the Commission's agenda on simplification and better regulation, this Recommendation seeks to provide Member States with practical guidance to ensure coherent, proportionate and citizen-friendly implementation of Union legislation on energy communities and self-consumption schemes, including energy sharing.
- (13) Member States should simplify administrative procedures for the establishment, operation and development of energy communities and self-consumption and reporting requirements. Implementation should build on existing structures and digital tools, ensuring coherence, cost-efficiency, and minimal administrative burden for suppliers, consumers and national authorities.
- (14) In order to support Member States implementing this Recommendation the Commission intends to undertake a number of measures for the further development and uptake of energy communities in the Union and to support the implementation of Union legislation. These measures are set out in the Action Plan in the annex to this Recommendation.

HAS ADOPTED THIS RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that Member States take the following measures:

1. when bringing into force the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with Article 2, point (8) of Directive (EU) 2019/944 **ensure**

coherence between the concepts of active customers and renewables self-consumers¹¹ in terms of rights and responsibilities relevant to individual renewables self-consumption¹² and energy sharing¹³, and by distinguishing those definitions from commercial actors while ensuring accessibility for all citizens, including tenants, multi-apartment residents, and vulnerable households and people affected by energy poverty, such as women and other groups at risk of discrimination which are disproportionately affected.

2. **clearly differentiate between the concept of renewable energy communities**¹⁴ **and citizen energy communities**¹⁵ in terms of membership structure, governance requirements and purpose, and highlight the specific advantages and benefits of specific forms of energy communities, to ensure coherence between them and clarity on their purpose.
3. when transposing and implementing the provisions in Article 15a of amending Directive (EU) 2024/1711 establish an **enabling framework for jointly acting active customers** that is consistent with the rights of individual renewables self-consumers in Article 21 of Directive (EU) 2018/2001 and active customers Article 15 of Directive (EU) 2019/944;
4. fully transpose EU legislation relating to energy communities and self-consumption¹⁶ and implement enabling frameworks that contribute to the further development of energy communities **across the heating and cooling sector, electricity sector and building renovation sector**, allowing energy communities to contribute to overall Union renovation and renewable energy targets.

Governance and Monitoring

5. develop a **national strategy for energy communities and self-consumption**, including an assessment of the potential contribution to EU energy objectives by 2030 and 2040 based on an assessment of the potential and barriers in line with Article 21, point (6) and Article 22, point (3) of Directive (EU) 2018/2001, and report progress through the integrated progress reports on the national energy and climate plans.
6. assign a competent authority or body to **assess and monitor the potential and impact of financial, social and environmental benefits of energy communities and self-consumption** and the removal of barriers in terms of geographical and demographic characteristics, as well as wider policy objectives or targets for the development of energy communities and self-consumption at regular intervals and

¹¹ As defined in Directive (EU)2018/2001.

¹² In line with Article 21 of Directive (EU) 2018/2001.

¹³ In line with Article 15a of Directive (EU) 2019/944.

¹⁴ As defined in Article 2, point (16), of Directive (EU) 2018/2001.

¹⁵ As defined in Article 2, point (11), of Directive (EU) 2019/944.

¹⁶Directive (EU) 2019/944 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 June 2019 on common rules for the internal market for electricity, in particular Article 2, point (8), (10a) and (11), Article 15 and 15a and Article 16, Directive (EU) 2018/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the promotion of energy from renewable sources (recast), in particular Article 2, point (16), Article 21 and Article 22.

possibly in coordination with the European Commission including on data collected from relevant stakeholders and the mapping carried out under Article 15b of Directive (EU) 2018/2001.

7. put in place **comprehensive and updated national registries for energy communities** that can be used to track compliance, project data and organisational features, without imposing disproportionate fees or administrative requirements related to specific energy activities.
8. involve consumers, including energy poor households, tenants and social housing residents, social partners, civil society organisations, businesses, local authorities, energy communities and/or their representatives in the implementation of this Recommendation through **regular consultation and structured dialogue**.

Permitting and System Integration

9. **remove permit-granting procedures for small-scale solar PV and storage installations**, introduce measures related to heat pumps, electric vehicles and electric vehicle charging points and simplify related grid connections, imposing specific and reasonable timeframes to inform final customers and energy communities and removing administrative requirements and regulatory obstacles¹⁷ for plug-in batteries and balcony solar PV installations up to 800 W.
10. ensure timely, transparent, proportionate and simple **grid connection procedures**, in line with the Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directives (EU) 2018/2001, (EU) 2019/944, (EU) 2024/1788 as regards acceleration of permit-granting procedures, COM(2025) 1007 final, by allowing the financial security deposit to be recovered or reduced if maturity criteria are fulfilled, by establishing specific timeframes to inform energy communities and final customers about procedures, costs and approvals, by providing dedicated assistance or guidance for applications and easing administrative and technical requirements where possible, while applying non-discriminatory and proportionate treatment in line with the applicable Union framework.
11. ensure that grid operators account for the expected growth and impact of self-consumption and energy community operations in their grid development plans to allow for anticipatory investments.
12. where there is insufficient grid capacity and where technically possible, **ensure that energy communities and final customers participating in energy sharing schemes can enter into a flexible grid connection agreement with system operators** when operating storage facilities or achieving high levels of local self-consumption, in line with Article 6a of Directive (EU) 2019/944.
13. allow citizen energy communities to manage **closed distribution grids**, in line with Article 16, paragraph (4) and Article 38, paragraph (2) of Directive (EU) 2019/944, and renewable energy communities to develop and operate renewable **heating and cooling networks** in their area of operation.

¹⁷See also the Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directives (EU) 2018/2001, (EU) 2019/944, (EU) 2024/1788 as regards acceleration of permit-granting procedures, COM(2025) 1007 final.

Standardised Approach to Energy Sharing

14. provide the possibility for energy sharing within the same bidding zone or a more limited geographical **area and encourage national regulatory authorities to assess the flexibility potential of local energy sharing**, in line with grid topology, and use this information when applying cost-reflective network charges.
15. **ensure that final customers engaged in energy sharing and energy communities are not subject to disproportionate and discriminatory procedures, requirements or supplier obligations** in line with Article 15 and Article 16 of Directive (EU) 2019/944, and Article 21 and Article 22 of Directive (EU) 2018/2001.
16. **Provide the conditions to facilitate the national regulatory authorities monitoring tasks of the removal of standalone supplier charges that are fixed and exceed direct costs incurred** due to energy sharing.
17. **designate a competent national authority to provide information** on energy sharing, including a helpdesk, a list of operational energy sharing organisers, voluntary template contracts, and technical, legal, economic and practical information.
18. ensure competent authorities put in place simple, transparent and digital **registration processes** for energy sharing arrangements, and that when the number of final customers engaged in energy sharing is above a certain number it is mandatory to designate this as internal energy sharing to help streamline the communication and registration process.
19. adopt an interoperable, secure and standardised approach to **data management and exchange** to operationalise energy sharing.
20. ensure that relevant **metering data are made available near real-time¹⁸, at least as short as the imbalance settlement period, as defined in Article 2(15) of the Energy Market Regulation¹⁹, and software tools are made available** to all relevant parties, including final customers, suppliers and, where relevant, energy sharing organisers and energy communities including for supporting energy sharing and flexibility services.
21. ensure that static energy-sharing keys²⁰ can be revised periodically are made available to final customers and facilitate the **gradual transition from static to dynamic energy-sharing keys** to optimise value for both the energy system and energy-sharing participants.
22. enable national regulatory authorities to implement **regulatory sandboxes** to experiment with allocation and metering across multiple meters and locations, allocation methods, tariff design, balancing responsibility, data exchange and settlement, and consumer protection and taxation.

¹⁸ As defined in Article 2, paragraph (26) of Directive (EU) 2019/944.

¹⁹ [EUR-Lex - 02019R0943-20240716 - EN - EUR-Lex](#).

²⁰When setting up an energy sharing initiative, a special formula that determines how the shared production will count towards particular energy sharing participants' energy bills needs to be adopted. This is called the sharing coefficient or sharing key.

Remuneration to Maximise the Value of Self-Consumption

23. accelerate the **deployment of smart meters** within a reasonable timeframe, and put in place interoperable data-exchange systems to enable accurate measurement, billing and optimisation of self-consumption.
24. ensure surplus electricity that is not self-consumed behind the meter or shared, can be **fairly rewarded based on market signals**, reflecting its value for both consumers and the system.
25. when designing operational support schemes for self-generated electricity injected into the grid, consider introducing **market premiums that incentivise the optimisation of self-consumption**, including through energy sharing.

Access to Relevant Energy Markets

26. implement **flexible licensing regimes** that allow energy communities, in cooperation with a balancing responsible party, as defined in Article 2, point (14) of Regulation (EU) 2019/943, to supply energy or provide flexibility services to final customers.
27. **promote cooperation with suppliers and aggregators**, as defined in Article 2, point (19) of Directive (EU) 2019/944 to facilitate the trading of energy or flexibility on behalf of energy communities or final customers entering into power purchase agreements, peer-to-peer trading arrangements, or flexibility service contracts, while ensuring that safeguard clauses are put in place that protect energy communities, active customers and renewable self-consumers from abuses by more powerful market actors.
28. ensure that minimum bid sizes, contract durations, market access models, and prequalification **requirements for local energy service markets** allow for smaller aggregated assets managed by energy communities or energy sharing groups to participate directly or through an aggregator and establish regulatory sandboxes to test and adapt such market design elements in a controlled environment.

Access to Public Funding and Private Financing

29. **provide investment support** for integrated systems including small-scale solar PV installations, storage or renewable heating and cooling systems, including as part of building renovation programmes focusing on vulnerable communities.
30. reflect on the feasibility to apply reduced VAT rates or exemptions on specific highly efficient, clean heating systems, as well as solar panels, in line with the VAT Directive 2006/112/EC as amended by Directive (EU) 2022/542 on rates of value added tax.
31. **make full use of the existing Cohesion Funds and other relevant Union funding** available under the 2021–2027 programming period and other financing instruments to provide financial support to energy communities and self-consumption schemes in

both urban and rural areas and coal regions in transition or other regions particularly affected by the transition to a decarbonised economy.

32. **identify where there are funding or financing gaps** for the different life cycle stages and **put in place dedicated funding programmes and financing instruments for energy communities**, especially seed funding at the (pre-)development phase.
33. **ensure** that general funding programmes and financing instruments for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects are accompanied by **specific frameworks that facilitate accessibility for energy communities**²¹, in particular through federations of energy communities.

Awareness-raising and Capacity-building Support

34. **promote** inclusion of community energy and energy-sharing topics in **education and training including vocational curricula**, notably through cooperation with universities, vocational and technical institutes and apprenticeship programmes supported by Erasmus+, the Pact for Skills and its Large-Scale Skills Partnerships in renewable energies, and the European Social Fund Plus.
35. **support youth and public engagement initiatives and actions involving representatives of rural and remote communities** to raise awareness, promote behavioural change and foster citizen participation in energy communities, self-consumption and energy sharing.
36. **communicate** clearly and sufficiently in advance upcoming **changes in tariff structures and remuneration mechanisms**, accompanied by transition periods and consumer guidance on impacts and opportunities.
37. **leverage existing or set up one-stop-shop** structures or similar mechanisms to provide a single online, and if possible physical interface for energy communities and consumers with comprehensive and user-friendly technical, legal, administrative, economic and financial advice, instructions, guidelines and materials such as templates, with the option to submit applications and monitor progress of permits, licences and support schemes.
38. **provide guidelines, knowledge-sharing opportunities, technical guidance, and project management training to local authorities** to increase their involvement in and support for energy sharing and energy community projects involving energy-poor households, as well as the development of infrastructure intensive projects like community-led heating and cooling.
39. **promote federations and secondary structures of energy communities and support capacity building** to allow them to provide energy-related services and **facilitate access to financing and technical assistance services** for local energy communities.

Regional and Cross-border Cooperation

²¹ e.g. through including small scale funding, awareness raising or support for application.

40. **enable cross-border participation** in citizen energy communities and in renewable energy communities and explore opportunities for cross-border energy communities, in particular in border regions, and remove legal or administrative barriers preventing joint investment, shared grid use or energy sharing across borders.
41. **consider integrating energy communities in existing macro-regional strategies and relevant action plans**, with support from cohesion policy instruments and Union funds.

Social Inclusiveness

42. adequately define **the concepts of ‘effective control’, ‘autonomy’, and ‘social, economic and environmental benefits’** as mentioned in the definition of renewable energy communities in Article 2, point (16) in Directive (EU) 2018/2001 and in the definition of citizen energy communities in Article 2, point (11) in Directive (EU) 2019/944, to ensure the concept is used by and for the public, to reduce administration when founding an energy community and to enhance trust in the concept.
43. promote **third-party and collective financing models for energy sharing**, including through energy communities to make self-consumption accessible to tenants, low-income and vulnerable households.
44. promote low-barrier participation models, including no-upfront-cost options, targeted, technical financial and administrative support for energy-poor, tenants and social housing residents, and persons with disabilities²² and accessible non-digital enrolment and support channels.
45. include **proportionate and inclusive selection criteria** that allow energy communities to bid, as well as social eligibility and evaluation criteria in **public auctions for renewable energy, support schemes and public procurement or concessions** for the deployment of renewable energy sources.
46. assess the distributional impacts to ensure that the costs and benefits of energy community and energy sharing schemes are shared fairly and do not disadvantage consumers who choose not to participate.
47. ensure that information intended for the public is also accessible for persons with disabilities in line with the accessibility requirements of annex I of Directive 2019/882.

Digitalisation and Innovation

48. ensure that energy communities and final customers have **access to relevant energy system and consumption data** in accordance with applicable Union data protection

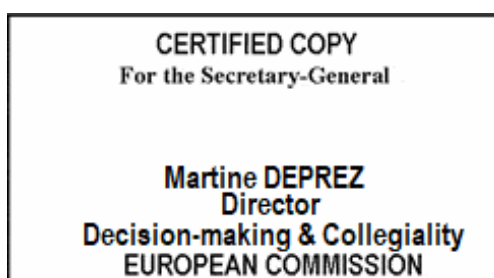
²² in line with the accessibility requirements of annex I of Directive 2019/882.

and interoperability requirements, notably those established under Article 24 of Directive (EU) 2019/944.

49. promote the development and use of **open-source digital platforms, accessible²³ and appropriate software tools and standardised interfaces** enabling energy sharing, demand forecasting and flexibility services by final customers and energy communities, as well as provide support for planning an energy community while ensuring cybersecurity and data protection.
50. encourage innovation partnerships and public-private cooperation that test **digital, AI-based and smart grid solutions** within energy communities and energy sharing groups under regulatory sandboxes or pilot schemes enabling learning by doing.

Done at Brussels, 30.4.2026

For the Commission
Dan JØRGENSEN
Member of the Commission



²³Interfaces intended for the public should be accessible for persons with disabilities in line with the accessibility requirements of annex I of Directive 2019/882.