

Power and Promise: Mobilizing the European Green Energy Transition

Kellan Anfinson, University of South Florida

Jean Monnet Center, Florida International University

January 27, 2026



Community Energy for the uptake of renewables in the electricity sector is a project aimed at facilitating the market uptake of renewable energy sources (RES) in the electricity sector.

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement N°953040.

Stakeholder Desks

BELGIUM

GERMANY

ITALY

LATVIA

THE NETHERLANDS

NORWAY

POLAND

PORTUGAL

SPAIN



Source: <https://come-res.eu/>

What is a REC?

- (a) which, in accordance with the applicable national law, is based on **open and voluntary participation**, is **autonomous**, and is **effectively controlled by shareholders or members that are located in the proximity** of the renewable energy projects that are owned and developed by that legal entity;
- (b) the shareholders or members of which are **natural persons, SMEs or local authorities**, including municipalities;
- (c) the **primary purpose** of which **is to provide environmental, economic or social community benefits** for its shareholders or members or for the local areas where it operates, **rather than financial profits**.

Source: Rescoop.eu

Clean Energy for all Europeans Package

- This package was announced in 2016 and completed in 2019.
 - It builds on 3 previous energy packages
 - It has been modified by the European green deal and other subsequent legislation.
- It is made up of:
 - 4 regulations – binding uniform rules across member states
 - 4 directives – principles that guide national regulatory frameworks

Significance of the package

- One of the most expansive climate change policy frameworks in the Global North
- Key part of fulfilling Europe's Paris Agreement commitments
- Has the goal of “empowering citizens and giving them ownership of the energy transition”

Argument:

- This empowerment also places a number of burdens and compulsions on citizens.
- This is because it is primarily an economic policy.
- It seeks to harness the energy of the market to produce the reforms, at the expense of social or political energy.

How to understand the energy of the market

- Classical liberalism
 - Markets and government are largely opposed and the former should serve as a limitation of the latter.
- Neoliberalism.
 - Relations between the state and the market become much more intertwined and complicated.

The energetics of state/market relations

1. The market serves as a foundation for sovereignty.
2. State power for intervening in market mechanisms is reduced.
3. Implement policies to found and expand market boundaries.
4. State helps multiply the number of enterprises.
5. Create conditions of intensified competition.

1. Market as support for sovereignty

- Internal
 - Affordable regular supply through a “new electricity market design” so that “electricity can be traded closer to real time.”
 - This will “improve our energy independence, and increase our resilience to external shocks or political pressure.”
- External
 - Global leadership on Climate – “the first major economy to translate its promises under the Paris Agreement into binding laws.”
 - Strengthen the euro – EU spends about €250 billion in US dollars every year to import energy
 - “In order to increase access to reliable finance and strengthening sovereignty, the European Commission is seeking to increase the use of the euro in international agreements and non-binding instruments related to energy, as well as in energy-related transactions, financial transactions and energy-related projects.”

2. Reduced state power for market intervention

- The energy package set three targets for 2030:
 - 40% cut in greenhouse gas emissions compared to 1990 levels (increased to 55% under the 2020 green deal)
 - 32% increase in renewable energy
 - 32.5% increase in energy efficiency
- Two other mechanisms for achieving GHG reductions:
 - Emissions Trading System
 - Effort Sharing System

3. State policies to expand market boundaries

- Requirements for new physical market infrastructure
 - Allow electricity to move freely and flexibly across borders to spur investment and respond to market crises
- Spur the creation of new enterprises
- Use public money to jumpstart private investment of “around €180 billion a year” over the next decade.
- Establishes an enforcement market
 - “The close monitoring and transparency of the reporting also gives clearer signals to investors, which in turn allows the market to take over and support the transition” (Nouicer et al. 2020).

4. Multiplication of enterprises

- Consumers are “at the heart of the energy transition.”
- Convert their energy consumption into an ongoing enterprise through constant monitoring, which is enabled by digitalization, smart grids, smart appliances, new appliance labeling systems, new storage systems, and the internet of things.
- Prosumers – individuals who consume and produce
- The clean energy package secures a new set of citizen rights to generate, self-consume, store, and sell renewable energy as well as participate in energy communities.
- “By 2030, energy communities could own some 17% of installed wind capacity and 21% of solar. By 2050, almost half of EU households are expected to be producing renewable energy.”

5. Increase competition

- Already discussed examples
 - Increase competitiveness of euro in global finance
 - New enterprises
 - Reporting mechanisms that create competition between Member States for investment
- Motivating danger when the EU “is facing greater competition from other parts of the world and needs to accelerate its efforts in order to maintain its position.”
- Tool to create a more efficiently distributed energy supply through “greater competition among suppliers and greater variety in the options on offer.”
- Goal when the EU seeks “to deliver a secure, sustainable and competitive energy system.”

Conclusions

1. This policy has much that is good.
2. Conditioned empowerment
 - “Liberal practice is an always different and mobile problematic relationship between the production of freedom and that which in the production of freedom risks limiting and destroying it” (Foucault 2008, 63-4).
3. Unclear environmental outcome.
 - No enforceable limits
 - The results could range from fatigue to a false sense of action on environmental crises like climate change.
 - Dilution of citizenship
 - Move from scientific/political control to market management

Wind and solar overtake fossil fuels in EU power supply

By Kate Abnett

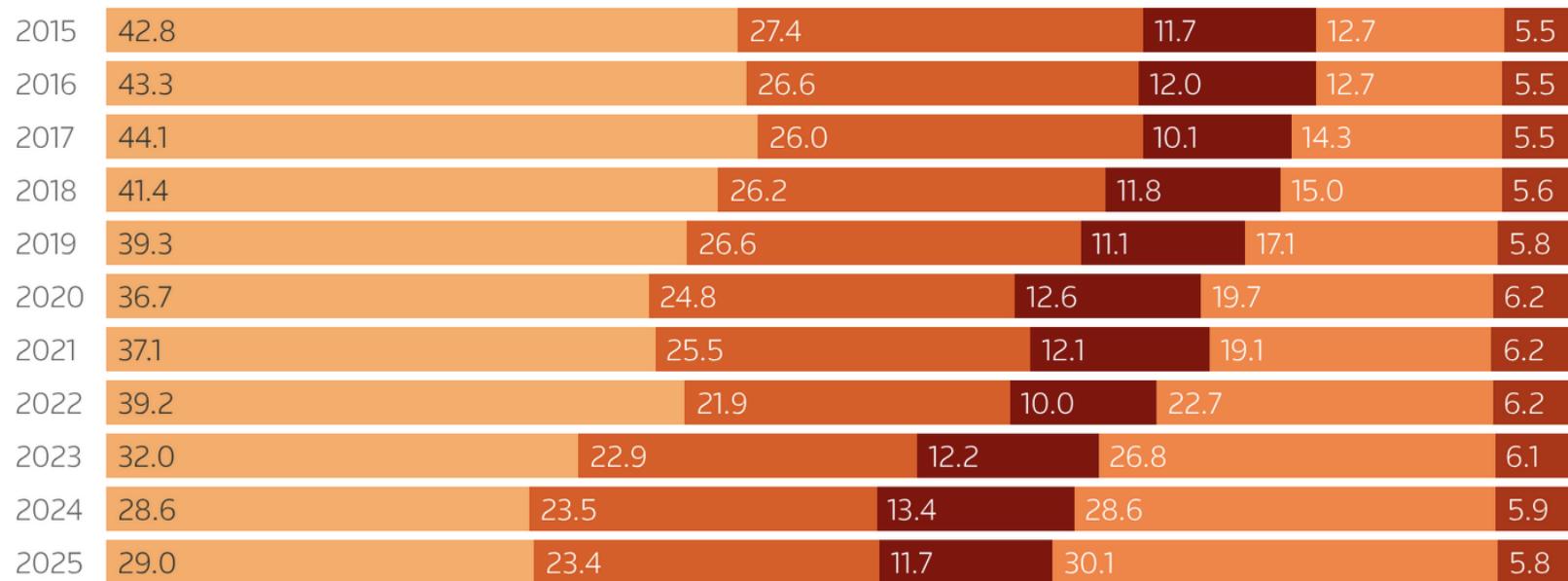
January 21, 2026 6:05 PM EST · Updated January 21, 2026



Wind and solar overtake fossil fuels in EU power mix

Share of total EU electricity generation, in %

● Fossil fuels (coal, gas, oil) ● Nuclear ● Hydro ● Wind and solar ● Other clean energy (biomass, other)



Questions?