



NOTA DE PRENSA

Energy co-operatives could help nearly 4,000 million people who are facing energy poverty worldwide

- Energy co-ops give people a say on how energy on energy production and consumption
- In countries like Spain, the cost of electricity has increased by 80% over the last 6 years

MADRID, 1st February 2017. The New Economy and Social Innovation (NESI) Global Forum had advocated for new and alternative ways of energy production and consumption, such as energy co-operatives, to tackle energy poverty, which affects 3.9 billion people worldwide. In fact, **over 1.2 billion people still live without access to electricity**, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA). More than 95% of the people suffering from energy poverty are either in sub-Saharan African or developing Asia, and around 80% are in rural areas, but this phenomenon also affects wealthy countries and big cities, as the cold wave that spread across Europe in January evidenced.

In countries like Spain, the wholesale price of electricity has reached a record 100 euros per megawatt-hour this winter, preventing thousands of people from turning the heating on. Just before that, in December 2016, the British EDF Energy announced it would raise prices by 8.4% from March 2017, a trend other British suppliers are likely to follow. And these are only two examples, the tip of the iceberg.

In this context, energy co-operatives aim to offer an alternative by putting people first and giving them a say on where energy comes from and how it is managed and supplied. Not only do **they contribute towards energy sovereignty, but they also help tackle climate change** by promoting renewable energy. And so they are contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals of **energy access, energy efficiency and reduced emissions**.

“They tackle the main flaws of the energy sector on enabling consumers and users to regain control over energy production and consumption, this being understood as a right



and not just a commodity,” explains José Luis Torres, vice-president of the energy co-operative ZENCER and who will represent the sector at NESI Forum on 19-22 April (Malaga, Spain).

ZENCER is the first co-operative energy in Andalusia. It is a non-profit organisation that commits to be clear and transparent in the way it operates, always focusing on its members’ needs and long-term sustainability. It abides by principles such as caring for the community, democratic control and equitable profit distribution.

As Jennifer Hinton, Co-Director of the Post Growth Institute and also speaker at NESI Forum, says: 'Not-for-profit energy co-operatives exist to meet social and environmental needs and they reinvest **100% of their profits back into their purpose**, keeping the wealth they generate in the communities they serve. Such energy co-ops play an integral role in transforming our economy from a profit-maximizing machine to a network of businesses that care for people and planet.'

Energy co-operatives commit to offering fairer prices and ensuring universal access to energy supplies, but they also aim to **provide 100% renewable energy and create a culture of efficiency and energy saving**. This contribution is key considering fuel combustion (without transport) is still responsible for over 50% of EU greenhouse gas emissions and solar and wind only provide 6% of global power generation.

“Renewable energy co-operatives are the first necessary step towards a new energy paradigm. Innovation and tech are moving forward and energy co-operatives’ goal is to put them at the service of citizens,” adds the Jose Luis Torres, from Zencer. Despite the fact that renewable energy sources made up nearly **90% of the power added to Europe’s electricity grids last year**, Torres believes there is still a lot to do, especially, from national and regional governments: “Public policies should think of the common good instead of focusing on benefiting a few.”

There are 2,397 European energy co-operatives, located mainly in Western Europe. The countries with a larger number of energy co-ops are Germany, Denmark and Austria. NESI Forum will be encouraging the debate around the opportunities they pose for the energy sector on 19-22 April 2017, in Málaga (Spain).

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

ABOUT NESI

NESI Forum is the only Global Forum on New Economy and Social Innovation, which brings together the main actors of change and opinion leaders to think, talk and lay the foundations of a new economy, more sustainable, social, based on values and aimed at the common good. It will gather 900 speakers, opinion leaders and change-makers from all over the world in Malaga, Spain, on 19th-22th April, 2016.

NESI is supported by the [Global Hub for the Common Good Foundation](#) a think-tank with international experts, created in 2015 with the vision of boosting a new social, economic and political model geared towards a common good.

More information on www.neweconomyforum.org

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NESI Forum press kit and spokespeople list also attached.