

## Virtual Policy Dialogue

### ***Enhancing Energy Communities in Rural Regions – Knowledge Exchange Between Schleswig-Holstein (Germany) and Latvia***

**Date: Wednesday, 26 June 2024: 10:00-14:00 CEST, Online**

#### **Purpose of the project Rural Energy Communities<sup>LV</sup>**

The Virtual Policy Dialogue is part of the project *Rural Energy Communities<sup>LV</sup> - Catalysing and Building Capacities for Renewable Energy Communities in Rural Latvia*. This project is funded by the German Federal Foundation for the Environment (Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt) under its thematic project cluster *Citizen Energy*. Project partners are the Heinrich Böll Foundation Schleswig-Holstein and the Latvian Rural Forum. The project runs from January 2024 until September 2025. Its overall objective is to enhance the development of Renewable Energy Communities (RECs), especially in rural areas of Latvia. The main activities encompass two virtual policy dialogues between actors from Germany, particularly the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein, and Latvia, a study visit of Latvian policy makers and experts to Schleswig-Holstein, the elaboration of relevant good practice cases, and awareness raising, networking and capacity development activities in the four rural Planning Regions of Latvia. Moreover, the proposed project aims to catalyze and facilitate the development of one rural pilot renewable energy community in Sece (municipality of Aizkraukle).

#### **Purpose of the Virtual Policy Dialogue and Target Groups**

Germany and Latvia are currently transposing and implementing relevant EU legislation for RECs. Both countries have to develop, inter alia, domestic rules for collective self-consumption (at building level) and energy sharing (using the public grid). Hence, a dialogue on designing a proper regulatory and enabling framework as well as an exchange on practical experiences from pilot projects may be fruitful for both sides. The federal state of Schleswig-Holstein in Germany can be regarded as a pioneer in the field of community wind farms and other forms of community energy. In 2018, the state government of Schleswig-Holstein established a community energy fund providing start up financing for citizen-led energy initiatives which serves as a model for the federal government and other federal states in Germany.

Latvia, in turn, has almost no experience with community energy initiatives yet but is relatively advanced in the digitalization of the electricity sector, particularly the rollout of smart meters. The government also started to launch legislation facilitating energy sharing within energy communities.

The policy dialogues in the project Rural Energy Communities<sup>LV</sup> aim to facilitate the mutual exchange of knowledge, experience and good practices between policy makers and community energy experts from Germany, particularly Schleswig-Holstein, and Latvia. The first Virtual Policy Dialogue addresses the overall energy situation and energy policy in both countries as well as the implementation of European provisions for RECs laid down in the Renewable Energy Directive and other pieces of legislation. It also highlights relevant issues like the digitalization of the energy system and the role of the citizen energy fund in Schleswig-Holstein as a potential model for Latvia. It is addressing a broad range of actors including policy makers, public authorities, associations, energy agencies, competence centres, community energy initiatives, Local Action Groups, civil society, NGOs, research organisations and other interested stakeholders.

## Agenda

**Moderation:** Doris Lorenz & Michael Krug, Heinrich Böll Foundation Schleswig-Holstein

<b>10:00</b>	<b>Opening</b> Doris Lorenz, Managing Director, Heinrich Böll Foundation Schleswig-Holstein
<b>10:05</b>	<b>Welcome addresses</b> Joschka Knuth, State Secretary, Ministry for Energy Transition, Climate, Environment and Nature Schleswig-Holstein Alda Vanaga, Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia to the Federal Republic of Germany (Video Message)
<b>10:15</b>	<b>Energy situation and energy policy in Schleswig-Holstein</b> Joschka Knuth, State Secretary, Ministry for Energy Transition, Climate, Environment and Nature Schleswig-Holstein
<b>10:30</b>	<b>Energy situation and energy policy in Latvia</b> Gunārs Valdmanis, Head of Department, Latvian Ministry of Climate and Energy
<b>10:45</b>	<b>Q&amp;A Session</b>
<b>11:00</b>	<b>Introduction of the DBU project <i>Rural Energy Communities</i><sup>LV</sup></b> Michael Krug, Project Coordinator, Heinrich Böll Foundation Schleswig-Holstein Ilvija Ašmane, Project Manager, Latvian Rural Forum
<b>11:15</b>	<b>Digitalisation and smart meter rollout in Latvia</b> Inese Zēmele, Project Manager Electricity Metering, Sadales Tīkli
<b>11:30</b>	<b>Q&amp;A session</b>
<b>11:45</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>12:00</b>	<b>Community energy in Germany: implementation of the Renewable Energy Directive and regulatory framework</b> Valérie Lange, Energy Policy Officer, German Citizen Energy Alliance
<b>12:20</b>	<b>Community energy in Latvia: implementation of the Renewable Energy Directive and regulatory framework</b> Gunārs Valdmanis, Head of Department, Latvian Ministry of Climate and Energy
<b>12:40</b>	<b>Q&amp;A session</b>
<b>13:00</b>	<b>Citizen Energy Fund Schleswig-Holstein: design, experiences, lessons learned</b> Angelika Behlig, Deputy Head of Division, Ministry for Energy Transition, Climate, Environment and Nature Schleswig-Holstein Laura Paulsen, Executive Officer, Ministry for Energy Transition, Climate, Environment and Nature Schleswig-Holstein
<b>13:15</b>	<b>Q&amp;A session</b>
<b>13:25</b>	<b>Interactive session: what can we learn from each other?</b> Zane Seredina, Interim Executive Director, Latvian Rural Forum Ilvija Ašmane, Project Manager, Latvian Rural Forum
<b>13:55</b>	<b>Next steps and outlook</b> Michael Krug, Project Coordinator, Heinrich Böll Foundation Schleswig-Holstein