



# SCALING-UP ENERGY COMMUNITIES IN BULGARIA

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# New Report:

## Scaling-up Energy Communities in Bulgaria



PDF in English:

<https://www.e3analytics.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/E3A-Bulgaria-Analysis-of-Energy-Communities-EN-FINAL.pdf>

PDF in Bulgarian:

<https://www.e3analytics.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/E3A-Bulgaria-Analysis-of-Energy-Communities-BG-FINAL.pdf>

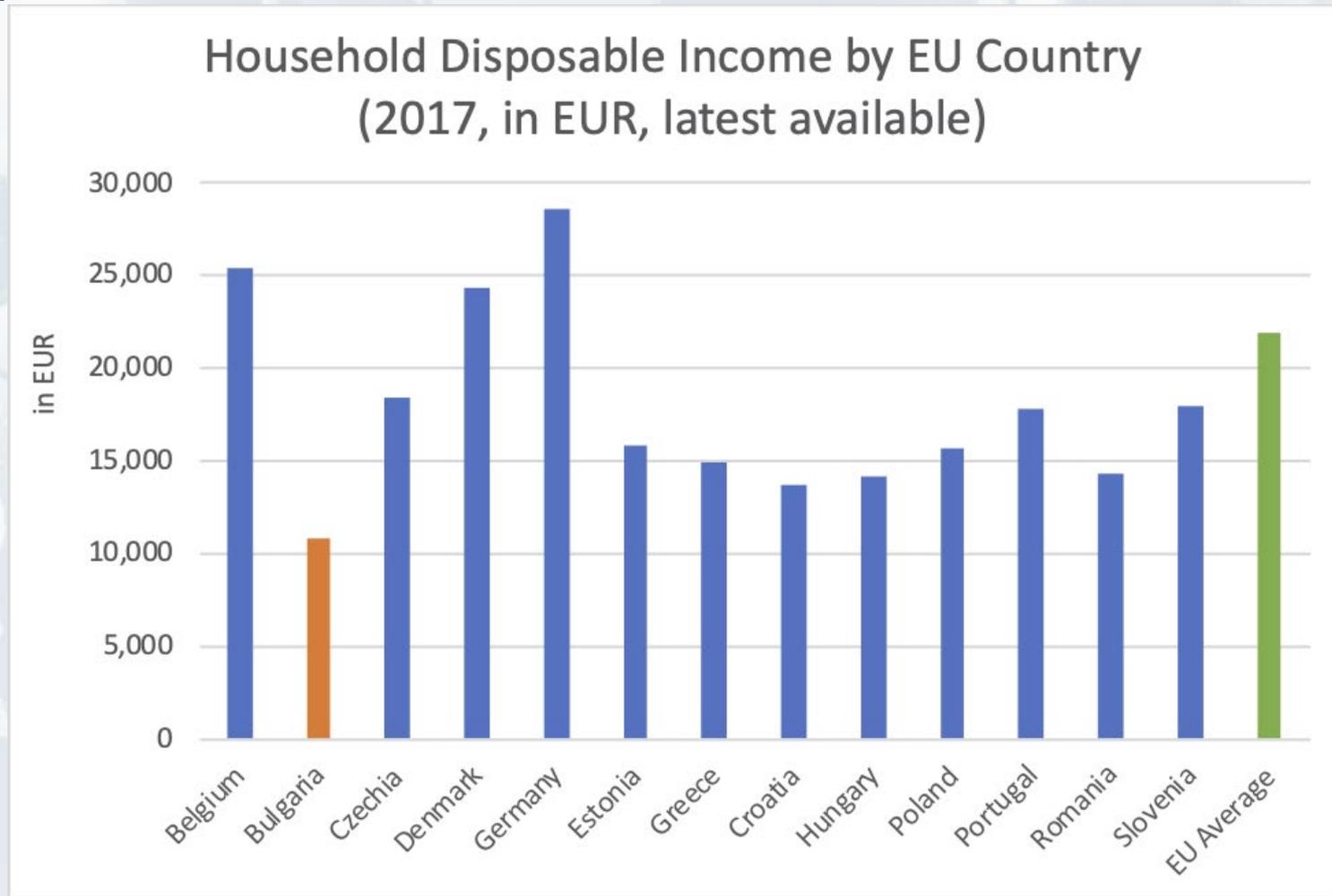
# Things to Grasp about Energy Communities

- **Making energy communities work in practice, from conception to financing to construction and grid connection, is extremely difficult**
- **On-the-ground support and the accumulation of local know-how are key<sup>1</sup>**
- **Hard deadlines** (such as fixed auction windows) **are highly counter-productive**: energy community projects rarely happen on schedule

# Summary of the Key Findings for Bulgaria

- Projects owned by groups of citizens or by energy communities in Bulgaria remain **rare**
- **A policy framework for energy communities does not yet exist**
- Current national planning is downplaying the role of more sustainable and cost-competitive technologies like solar PV
- **Systematic under-estimation of prosumers and of bottom-up market forces**

# A further barrier: Bulgaria has the lowest level of disposable HH income in the EU



# Examples of “proto” energy communities in Bulgaria

- An apartment complex in **Sofia’s** “Hristo Smirnenski” district: 28kW project: FIT revenues
- **Burgas Municipality** – several (largely grant-funded) solar PV projects exist, belonging to the municipality
  - Has published a 2020-2030 energy plan<sup>1</sup>
- **Straldzha Municipality** – taking advantage of geothermal energy

<sup>1</sup> Burgas Plan: [https://www.burgas.bg/uploads/posts/2021/burgas\\_res\\_longterm1.pdf](https://www.burgas.bg/uploads/posts/2021/burgas_res_longterm1.pdf)

# Solar Gardens: An Alternative Model

- Mostly municipally-led (mainly in US and AUS)
- Local residents can subscribe to (or buy) a certain # of solar panels in a project built nearby, often on municipally-owned land
- Participants are provided a credit on their electricity bill based on their share in the project
- **Advantages:** better economies of scale; low barriers to entry; no maintenance; municipality takes care of the procurement process; provides an active sense of participation; can be combined with grant funding

# Recommendations (1)

- In Bulgaria, **municipalities have a critical role to play:** mobilize funding, identify public land/roofs, coordinate resources, convene stakeholders
- **The establishment of dedicated credit facilities** (available to groups of citizens and to municipalities) could help facilitate access to financing
- **Grant funds could be provided on a “matching” basis:** every EUR gathered is matched by EU (or municipal) co-funding
- This would boost the pool of equity and create a greater **incentive to participate**

## Recommendations (2)

- **Clear regulations on surplus power sales are needed:**  
e.g. Surplus Power Tariffs<sup>1</sup>
- **Energy community members need to be able to erase their own consumption from off-site RE projects: i.e. Virtual Net Metering**
- **A dedicated agency** should be established for citizen and community energy projects: one-stop-shop providing expertise, forms, permits, and advice

THANK YOU!

**QUESTIONS?**

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