



Market Uptake of Renewable Energies for Heating and Cooling Final International Conference of the EU H2020 Projects BioVill and CoolHeating

Munich, 12.12.2018 The 28th of November 2018 stood in the sign of the EU approach of fostering the market uptake of renewable energies for heating and cooling in South-Eastern European countries. The European Commission released its strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate-neutral economy by 2050. The same day, the joint final international conference of the 3 years-projects BioVill (<http://www.biovill.eu/>) and CoolHeating (<http://www.coolheating.eu>), funded by the EU's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme to support the establishment of bioenergy villages and small modular renewable heating and cooling grids, was held at the Manos Conference Centre in Brussels, Belgium.

More than eighty representatives of the EU commission, national and international partner organisations, companies involved in renewable energy as well as district heating and cooling investments and the project consortia took the excellent opportunity to meet renewable energy experts, to talk to possible investors, and to discuss the project results and the implementation progress of renewable bioenergy villages and sustainable district heating and cooling systems in Europe. New contacts were created and business opportunities promoted. Finally, the participants gained an insight on how both EU projects contribute to accelerate the clean energy transition in South-East Europe. For example, the BioVill project has initiated the implementation of the bioenergy village approach up to the investment stage in 7 villages in the partner countries. And CoolHeating succeeded to initiate five small district heating grids in the target communities of the project.

Besides interesting presentations of the EU commission and the project partners, a highlight of the event was the vivid panel discussion, which included the audience's perspectives, summarized the impacts of both projects on the market uptake of renewable energies for heating and cooling in Europe and accentuated the role of cities, municipalities and local communities in the energy transition processes.

To the delight of the organizers, the participants confirmed at the end that the conference objective - providing a platform for the presentation and discussion of the projects results to the political, economic and scientific communities in Europe - was successfully achieved. Alliances between the public and the private sector were endorsed, the main project outcomes were assessed and best practice examples as well as innovative value chains for the sustainable use of renewable energies in local district heating and cooling grids were presented. Finally, also the idea of jointly organising the final conference for both projects was very much welcomed. The exchange amongst the representatives of public authorities and utility companies, national and regional decision makers and the research community paved the way to an expanding network within the renewable energy community for district heating and cooling. All BioVill and CoolHeating partners highlighted that they will continue with the engaged work and support the fostering of renewable energy approaches in South-Eastern Europe.



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The conference programme was structured in four sessions, providing a number of diverse presentations and discussions. In the first session, an overview on renewable heating and cooling developments in Europe was given by representatives of the European Commission and the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). The speakers underlined the endeavours of European countries to team up and lead the energy innovation. Furthermore, they emphasized that the development of low carbon technologies need collaborative research and mutual cooperation between different actors. The conference coincided with the publication of the European Commission's strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate-neutral economy by 2050. The strategy shows how Europe can lead the way to climate neutrality by investing into realistic technological solutions, empowering citizens, and aligning action in key areas such as industrial policy, finance or research – while ensuring social fairness for the transition. As IRENA's representative stated, this is supported by rapidly decreasing costs for renewable energy technologies so that the renewables are now cost-competitive with fossil fuels.

Within the second session, the bioenergy village approach and main results of the BioVill project were introduced. Furthermore, the national bioenergy village support programme in Germany was depicted and concepts for two prospective bioenergy villages in Slovenia and Macedonia were presented as examples. It was concluded, that the project fully achieved its objectives by supporting seven target villages to become bioenergy villages and initiating the first phase of several bioenergy projects in these villages up to the investment stage.

The third session was dedicated to the CoolHeating project results and the market uptake of small modular renewable district heating and cooling grids for communities. The focus was placed mainly on the planning of small district heating and cooling grids, hereby showcasing district heating concepts in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Besides the excellent project outcome of initiating five small district heating grids in the target communities, high-level representatives of the city of Sabac in Serbia took the conference as a platform to officially sign a letter of commitment for the 2nd phase of the implementation of the district heating grid. The 1st phase of this project in Sabac is currently being realized within the frame of the CoolHeating project.



The fourth and last session was used to summarize the undertaken initiatives for a market uptake of renewable energies for heating and cooling in Europe and the impacts of both projects, through a panel discussion. A few more district heating concepts in Croatia and Romania were explained. At the end, the role of cities, municipalities and local communities in the development of district heating systems and the energy transition in general, was accentuated.

The participants also intensively used the breaks and the farewell reception at the end of the conference to continue discussions and networking. This was especially useful for the participants from the partner countries of the projects since they now profit from the exchange of experiences and newly created contacts for their future work on renewable energy projects in the municipalities.