

ECOLISE



COMMUNITIES
FOR FUTURE

Europe-wide local community climate action programme launches in Brussels

* PRESS Release * PRESS Release * PRESS Release *
EMBARGOED TUES 29th September

Communities for Future, a new Europe-wide action programme to inspire, empower and enable local community-led responses to the climate and ecological emergency is being launched online 'in' **Brussels** on **Tues 29th September**, 9h30-12h CEST.

Communities for Future aims to facilitate the widespread mainstreaming of regenerative and transformative community-led action on climate change and sustainability. It draws on the work, experience and knowledge of members and partners of ECOLISE, the European network for community-led initiatives on climate change and sustainability, which is spearheading the programme.

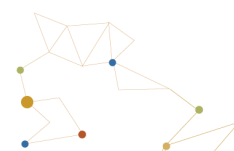
Two European Commissioners, **Dubravka Šuica**, Vice-president, Commissioner for Democracy, Demography & the Future of Europe, and **Virginijus Sinkevičius**, Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, will give keynote speeches at the launch of Communities for Future.

"We want people to be inspired by the good solutions that are already out there and to find next steps. Initiatives like ECOLISE's Communities for Future share this vision and build on existing programmes," says **Commissioner Sinkevičius**.

A number of MEPs will also participate at the event: **Seán Kelly** (Ireland, EPP); **Salima Yenbou** (France, Greens/European Free Alliance), **Niklas Nienauß** (Germany, Greens/European Free Alliance) and **Irena Joveva** (Slovenia, Renew Europe). **Silke Karcher**, **European Climate and Energy Policy**, **BMU** will represent the German EU Council Presidency.

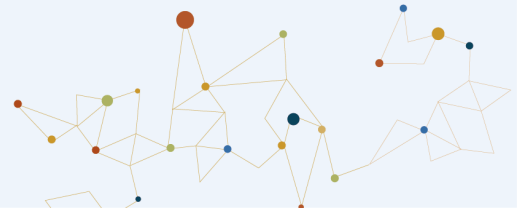
European Commission officials attending the launch include **Sophie Dewispelaere** of the **Secretariat-General's Recovery & Resilience Task Force** and **Elena Višnar Malinovská** of **DG CLIMA**.

EUROPEAN NETWORK
FOR COMMUNITY-LED
INITIATIVES ON CLIMATE CHANGE
AND SUSTAINABILITY



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Peter Schmidt, Istvan Komoroczki and Baiba Miltoviča will represent the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), which is jointly hosting the event with ECOLISE.

"In recent months, as the pandemic has turned our lives upside down, we have seen first-hand the indispensable role of local communities in times of crisis. In contemplating how to rebuild our economies and societies in a way that also responds to the climate and ecological emergencies, the role of communities takes on an even greater importance. As job losses and business failures mount, increased support for community-led action can provide a way to rebuild local economies in a way that addresses deep-rooted inequality and unsustainable practices that are at the heart of the climate and ecological emergency," says **Eamon O'Hara, Executive Director of ECOLISE.**

"We are in a climate emergency. At the time of the global health, social and economic crises caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the EU's commitment to the transition to a sustainable, resilient, climate-neutral and resource-efficient wellbeing economy must be reaffirmed. We need transformational shifts in culture, infrastructure, behaviour, participation and livelihoods, but also empower citizens in multiple ways. We are proud to continue supporting local communities which are leading this transition on the ground," says **Peter Schmidt**, President of the EESC's Sustainable Development Observatory.

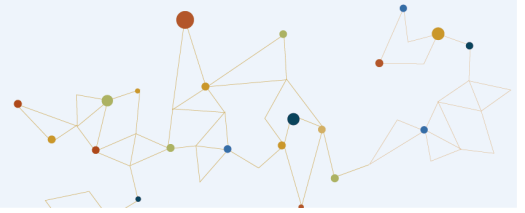
"Transformative change can only exist where the top-down and bottom-up approaches meet, where European policies allow the mainstreaming of local good practices. This is already starting to happen thanks to the commitment of communities, institutions and organizations like ECOLISE or RURENER. Change is inherent to societies, the challenge is to shape this change towards a sustainable and resilient EU," says **Celine Seince**, European coordinator of **RURENER**, European network of rural communities engaged in the energy transition, and a partner in Communities for Future.

"Communities are at the core of a transition from an extractive, destructive, undemocratic, short-sighted speculative economy, to a regenerative, creative, truly participative and locally owned, thriving economy. Global crises require trans-local solutions, ecologically based and with a long term vision. The European Union can protect, enable, support and promote communities of practice through social solidarity economies and initiatives that also involve the public sector. We need cooperative towns, education, health. And a solidarity based Europe, really capable of the future", said **Jason Nardi, Delegate General of RIPESS Europe**, the European network of the Social Solidarity Economy organisations, and a partner in Communities for Future.

Communities for Future supports the mainstreaming of transformative community-led action by providing: stories of inspirational communities; access to training and resources such as guides, manuals and podcasts to help citizens organise and work with their communities; events where people can meet and learn from others; an online space where people can collaborate; and contacts of people and organisations who can support community-led action.

The European launch of Communities for Future is the culmination of a series of online meetings hosted over the last 10 days by the Croatian Permaculture Association in Croatia; the Permakultur Institut in Germany; Cultivate and Carraig Dúlra in Ireland; LiberTerra community in





the Netherlands; FCUL and Habita Regen in Portugal; and the Permaculture Association and Scottish Communities Climate Action Network in the UK.

Representatives from the ECOLISE network and its partners who have participated in these national events will share the fruits of their discussions at the Brussels meeting as well as stories of their local transformative work in the face of the climate and biodiversity emergencies and the pandemic.

The launch also includes a Meet & Greet session enabling EU & national stakeholders such as European Youth Forum and Transition Network to informally and directly share their actions and solutions regarding climate action, sustainability and social inclusion with participants.

ECOLISE has 42 member organisations across Europe, broadly representing the permaculture, ecovillage and Transition town movements, in addition to national networks of communities and local development agencies; ICLEI, the network of local governments for sustainability; and specialist research and educational organisations.

For further information about the programme for the Brussels event see [here](#). All welcome but registration is necessary via this [online registration form](#).

The event will be livestreamed here <https://www.facebook.com/ecolise.eu/live/>

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Further information about Communities for Future see <https://www.communitiesforfuture.org>

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