

ROMANIAN ENERGY CENTER ASSOCIATION PARTICIPATED AT "PROMOTING COOPERATION BETWEEN DIGITALISATION OF ENERGY CENTRES OF EXPERTISE AND DIGITAL INNOVATION HUBS" WORKSHOP

16th of March 2022, Carina Ioana ZIDARU

The representatives of the Romanian Energy Center (CRE) Association participated at the Online Workshop „**PROMOTING COOPERATION BETWEEN DIGITALISATION OF ENERGY CENTRES OF EXPERTISE AND DIGITAL INNOVATION HUBS**”, organized by the European Commission, on Friday, 25th of February 2022. During the Workshop, EDDIE Project – „EDucation for Digitalization of Energy”, created the context for the interventions in Session 1 - „*The digitalisation of energy: Opportunities, challenges and needed actions for a EU-Local Innovation ecosystem*”. The European Commission, namely DG ENERGY and DG CONNECT organized this dedicated Workshop as the first step towards the creation of a platform to support innovation ecosystems - gathering national, regional, local, European institutions and energy and digital players to support investments, skills and expertise of strategic digital technologies in the energy system, from innovation to deployment.

The Agenda of this [Workshop](#) highlighted the Digitalisation of Energy Action Plan and proposals related to the uptake of digital technologies in the energy system; the European Digital Innovation Hubs: a network to support building of digital capacities across the European Union (EU); the digital and energy local/regional innovation ecosystem, and interesting topics regarding the way towards a European digital energy platform.

In 2020, CRE expanded its Research and Innovation Portfolio, through the European Project **EDDIE** funded by the European Commission (EC) under the ERASMUS+ Program. EDDIE aims at creating a Sector Skills Alliance (SSA) by bringing together all the relevant stakeholders in the Energy value chain such as industry, education and training providers, European organizations, recruiters, social partners, and public authorities. The main objective of this SSA is to develop a long-driven Blueprint for the Digitalization of the European Energy Sector (DEES) to enable the matching between the current and future demand of skills necessary for the DEES and the supply of improved Vocational Education and Training (VET) systems and beyond.

The Workshop who aimed at collecting further input from stakeholders and other relevant Commission services, was structured in two Sessions: „*The digitalisation of energy: Opportunities, challenges and needed actions for a EU-Local Innovation ecosystem*” and „*The way towards a European digital energy platform*”. During the Workshop, EDDIE Project has been represented by Dr. Claudia BATISTELLI - Institute for Automation of Complex Power Systems of RWTH Aachen University. Ms. BATISTELLI addressed the important role of the Digitalization of the Energy Sector by sharing core insights about the digital energy technical topics, people's needs in terms of digital skills, as well as digital and energy local/regional innovation ecosystems.

Furthermore, during opening Session 1 – „*The digitalisation of energy: Opportunities, challenges and needed actions for a EU-Local Innovation ecosystem*”, Vincent BERRUTTO - Head of Unit, Research, Innovation, Digitalisation, Competitiveness, DG ENERGY, presented in its introduction the main five areas of the Digitalisation of the Energy Action Plan, namely Data Exchange Framework, Benefits for Consumers, Literacy, Skills and Digital Tools to Empower Citizens, Cybersecurity and Climate Neutrality of the ICT Sector. During the first panel, the assessments was for the need of horizontal and vertical sharing of best practices, the need for use-cases to be implemented into the real world, the need to coordinate the local realities and scale-up solutions that are developed at local and regional level.



The digitalisation of the energy system can boost the EU competitiveness, drive innovative solutions, and even open new global markets for components and services. Meanwhile, the digital transformation should be an enabler for citizens, prosumers, and energy communities to play an active role in the energy markets. Digital solutions shall be seen as key enablers to accelerate the energy transition but also having an approach that is citizen and consumers centric. The main drivers shall be commitment, engagement, consensus, and awareness, not only when it comes to research and innovation or specific solutions but also on the need to integrate them in the energy system. The Digitalisation of Energy Action Plan, which will be adopted in June 2022, is therefore exploring actions to design an investment pathway targeting the entire energy value chain without neglecting the central role of citizens, prosumers, and energy communities.

„When it comes to local digital ecosystems, skills are very important. One of the top priorities for local digital ecosystems to be successful is to produce awareness of the opportunities that digital technologies offer and to ensure that the technological talent needed to cope with technological change is added to the local ecosystem. This means adding the required skills to the local labour market, but also beyond, to the society, to improve the lives of citizens. Another equally important thing is the capacity to attract talent and expertise, open talent networks to facilitate its awareness and also improve the quality of life for people, and in the end the customers' quality of life” highlighted EDDIE representative – Dr. Claudia BATISTELLI.

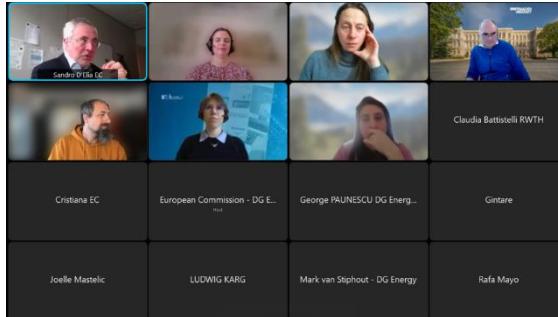
Professor Sergio OLIVERO - Head of Business & Finance Innovation at Energy Center of The Politecnico di Torino pointed out the following: „The focus should be on empowering citizens at the heart of the energy transition, and this can be done through renewable energy communities, as defined by the European directive. Because renewable energy communities are a powerful catalyst for the energy transition, because they imply the use of Information and Communication Technologies, the use of Internet of Things and Artificial Intelligence in order to make self-consumption possible. The focus should be on moving from ICT, IOT centres approach to an energy driven approach, in which information and communication technology is a tool for making the energy transition work. In terms of digital solution, you need a Digital Platform in order to share the economic benefits of renewable energy communities”.

Moreover, during the discussions in **Panel 2 – „The Way Towards a European Digital Energy Platform”**, the exchange of information was towards the features and characteristics of such platform, how to create synergies, how to create added value on top of existing solutions and what stakeholders to be involved. The main outcome was identified as the platform shall integrate other sector of activity, not only energy and digital sectors, but the platform would also help integrating multiple ecosystems, interaction with other platforms with the focus on creating an open environment for new players, new business models can emerge. The assessment was that the platform shall create a common language between energy, digital players, between different sectors and also involve small realities with the goal of accelerating innovation cycle and bringing digital solution into the energy sector. Professor Antonello MONTI, Coordinator of OneNet and Platone projects, pointed out a long-term vision for engagement in digitalization: to create European-wide digital solutions, to create consensus from the beginning to establish a common way to keep solutions alive and locally engaged.

The role of Education in the Digital Era for Digitalization and the Development of synergies with other innovation projects funded by the European Commission (EC) through the ERASMUS+ program will create the framework for EDDIE Project to actively contribute to decisions in the process of DEES.

Conclusions and Final Remarks

In the final remarks, Ms. GIULIA SERRA - DG ENERGY underlined the main aim of this Workshop which was organized with the purpose to collect the better understanding on these needs for the European Digital Energy Platform, that is built on coordination but also is adapted to local needs. *“This workshop, as indeed represented the first step to work on the creation of the digital energy platform that can support the innovation ecosystems, investments, guide investments, skills and expertise of strategic digital technologies in energy systems from innovation to deployment”*, pointed out Ms. SERRA.



CRE Association is an active and strategic partner together with its members and other potential members in international consortia for deploying energy projects funded by the EC, such as: [CROSSBOW](#), [PHOENIX](#), [TRINITY](#), [EDDIE](#), [EDGEFLEX](#), [SUCCESS](#), [RESERVE](#), [NRG5](#), [WISEGRID](#), [SOGNO](#) and [CYBERSEAS](#).