

EmPowerIngUs

Innovative Transfer Network Quarterly Network Journal no. 2



URBACT



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Interreg

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This document represents the Quarterly Network Journal no. 2 for the EmPowerIngUs ITN project partnership. It was developed by the Lead Expert Klemen Strmšnik with city-level inputs from all ULG Coordinators – Alejandro Lopez Parejo (Getafe, ES), Yasin Tatou and Fabio Barbero (Etterbeek, BE), Fernando Gomes and Liliana Fernandes (Maia, PT), Georgi Petkov (Pomorie, BG), Konstantinos Karampourniotis and Laoura Vavaliou (Trikala, GR) – with the support of their project teams and ULG members. It aims to present the EmPowerIngUs project partnership and communicate our transfer progress to interested cities across Europe.

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1. ABOUT THE EmPowerIngUs PROJECT AND OUR CITIES

The success of the Energy Poverty Intelligence Unit (EPIU) and its recognition as a Good Practice by the URBACT Programme have positioned Getafe (ES) as one of the most active and innovative cities in the fight against energy poverty.

To fully grasp the logic behind the EPIU project and its good practice, one must first understand its underlying philosophy, which can be summarized in the following statement:

"A home is much more than just a building. It encompasses the entire built environment, including the people who live within it."



EPIU's integrated and participatory approach operates across three scales (Home, Building, and Neighbourhood), utilizing three key tools (Intelligence Unit, One-Stop Shop, and Tailor-Made Solutions) to drive action through three stages (Understand, Support, and Act).

This enabled Getafe to compose a transnational partnership and develop the EmPowerIngUs Innovative Transfer Network – a project aiming to reflect on the key achievements and lessons learned from the EPIU Good Practice while transferring its methodologies and approaches to four other cities: [Etterbeek \(Belgium\)](#),

[Maia \(Portugal\)](#), [Pomorie \(Bulgaria\)](#), and [Trikala \(Greece\)](#).

Rather than being a static model, EPIU was designed as an evolving process – one that is continuously refined to better serve the citizens of Getafe and beyond. This commitment to innovation is why Getafe is leveraging the EmPowerIngUs project to further enhance and improve the EPIU Good Practice.



For more information about the EPIU Good Practice please visit the [EPIU project website](#), the [EPIU UIA profile](#), or the [EPIU Portico profile](#). You can follow the progress of the EmPowerIngUs project on [our URBACT website](#), as well as [EMSV's website](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#) channel.

2. ABOUT THE PROGRESS MADE IN URBACT LOCAL GROUPS

2.1 Progress made by the ULG of our Lead Partner city – Getafe (ES)

The URBACT Local Group (ULG) of Getafe continues to play a key role within the EmPowerIngUs project, in which Getafe leads the European knowledge transfer network. The group is structured around three main thematic areas — social, urban, and technological — working in coordination to adapt and apply EmPowerIngUs methodologies within the framework of the Getafe Rehabilita Strategy.

1. Social Group (cluster 1)



Coordinated mainly with the Spanish Red Cross and various local associations, this group has held specific meetings focused on strengthening social participation and inclusion in urban regeneration processes. The actions have been centered on improving the delivery and use of energy efficiency kits at the household scale, organizing their distribution during the winter and summer periods to enhance effectiveness and optimize communication. Looking ahead, the group aims to foster greater community and social involvement in the implementation of urban-scale actions, supported by some of the ULG stakeholders, such as the Getafe Potencia

Energy Community, among others.

2. Urban Action Group (cluster 2)

The Urban Planning and Maintenance Departments of the Getafe Municipality have achieved significant progress in transferring and applying the EPIU methodology to other municipal projects. These tools have been incorporated into the Getafe Rehabilita Strategy and are currently being replicated in approximately ten public works, consolidating a participatory, data-driven, and cross-sectoral approach to urban transformation processes.

3. Technological Group (cluster 3)

Composed of the Municipal IT Department, Astibot, and Carlos III University, this group is working on the continuity and development of data management systems, GIS tools, and digital visualization platforms. While progress has been made in defining data structures and viewer functionalities, stronger involvement from the municipal IT department is required to accelerate integration, ensure interoperability, and guarantee the long-term sustainability of digital tools.

National and International Collaboration

Beyond the local framework, Getafe's participation in EmPowerIngUs has fostered important synergies at both national and European levels. The municipality continues to collaborate actively with the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP) — which recently invited Getafe to present its Rehabilitation Strategy — as well as with European networks such as EU Peers, Cities Forum and others focused on sustainable urban development.



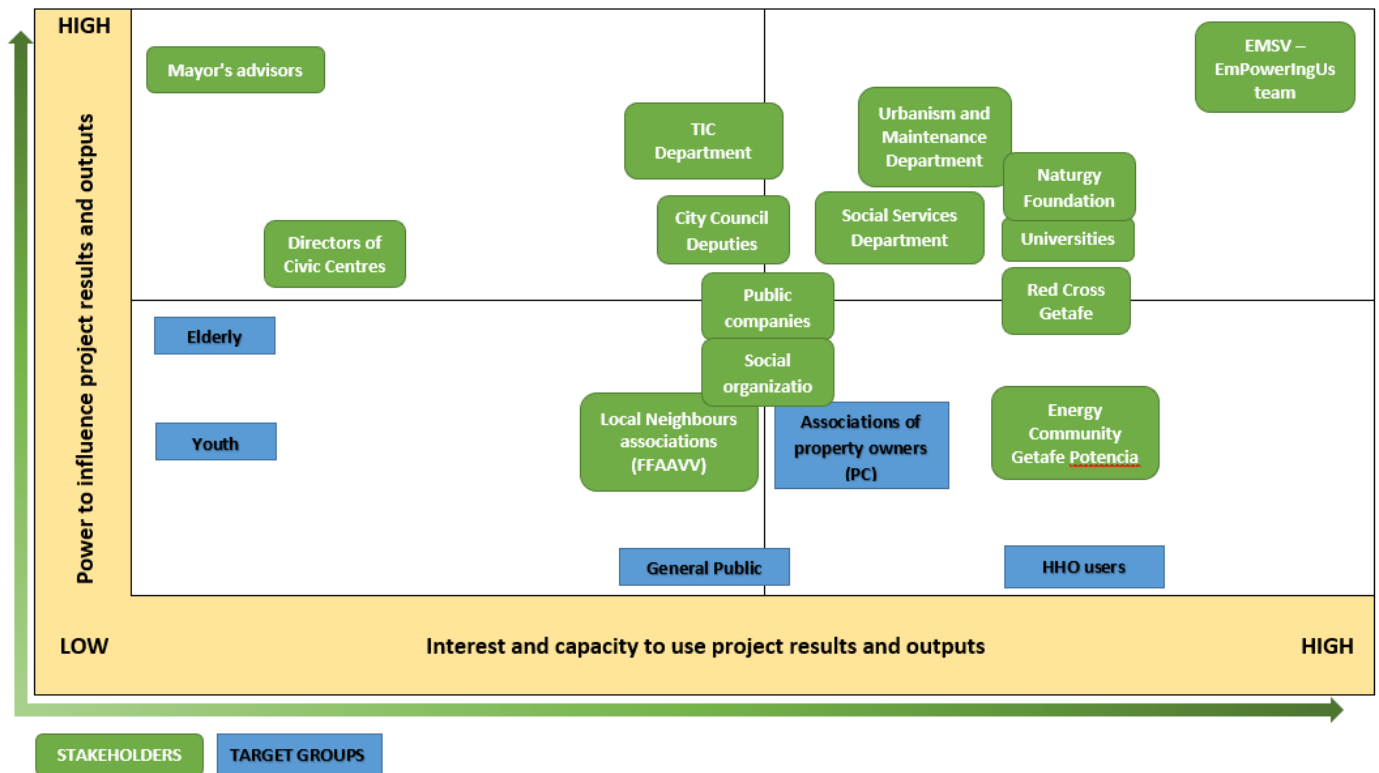
In addition, Getafe has contributed to knowledge exchange through its participation in the National Congress on Sustainable Architecture, organized by the Spanish Council of Architects (CSCAE). These collaborations reinforce the city's leadership role in promoting integrated and inclusive urban regeneration models.



Overall Assessment

The Getafe ULG demonstrates strong interdepartmental coordination and tangible progress in the transfer of methodologies within the EmPowerIngUs framework. The next phase will focus on consolidating the technological dimension, deepening citizen engagement, and strengthening national and European collaborations — positioning Getafe Rehabilita as a long-term benchmark for sustainable and inclusive urban regeneration.

WHO IS SITTING AROUND THE TABLE IN GETAFE - STAKEHOLDERS POWER/INTEREST MATRIX TODAY



Note: Due to a longer period of active work with our stakeholder group, it is very stable, with no changes.

2.2 Progress made by the ULG of our Transfer city – Etterbeek (BE)

Etterbeek’s ULG consists of a core group (Level 1) with a stable composition, and a broader group (Level 2) whose membership is more flexible, adapting to the themes addressed and the expertise required. Etterbeek’s ULG activities in this period were focused on:



1. The preparation, execution, and follow-up of the transnational city meeting in Etterbeek (3–5 June 2025). Preparing the city visit enabled the ULG to involve external stakeholders and/or strengthen collaboration with non-municipal actors, such as the PLAGÉ plan coordination (rationalization of energy consumption) led by the social housing company Log ‘Iris, academia (presentation of the Slow Heat project by Dr. Geoffrey Van Moeseke), and civil society (Chamber Community Centre).

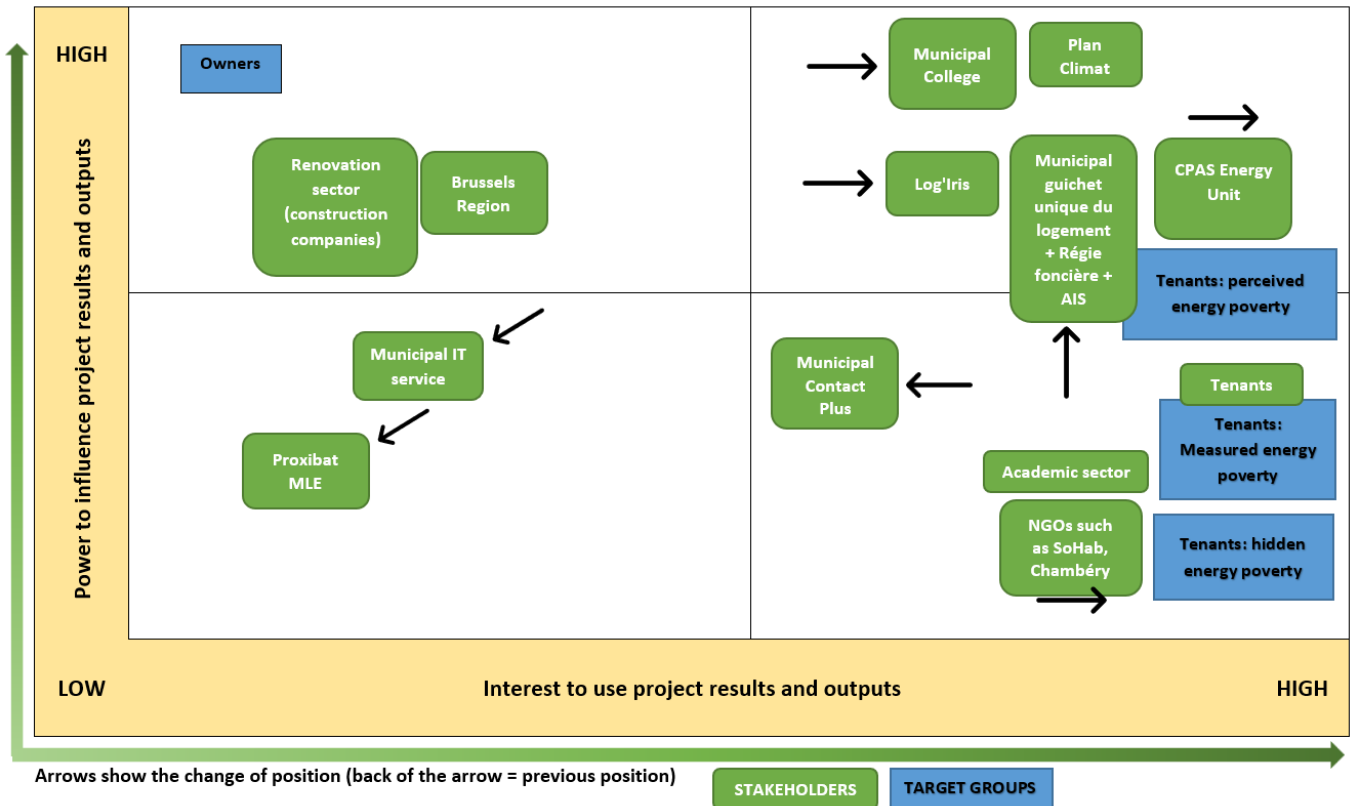
Slow Heat project by Dr. Geoffrey Van Moeseke), and civil society (Chamber Community Centre).

2. The preparation and follow-up of testing activities, namely the renovation strategy for the Régie Foncière’s housing stock and awareness-raising actions targeting the Régie Foncière’s tenants. A public procurement procedure was launched to select a firm to develop a renovation strategy. The study is expected to be completed by March 2026 and will form the basis for the Régie Foncière’s approach. In the meantime, the ULG has refined the objectives, content, and format of the awareness-raising workshops for the Régie Foncière’s tenants. Since renovation works will not begin until the strategy is finalized and approved, the workshops will instead focus on existing heating techniques and building types. Around five associations and companies specializing in energy and participatory tools have been contacted in June-August 2025, and a statement of work has been finalized. This will be submitted for approval to the municipal authorities in October 2025, after which a public competition will be launched to designate the contractor. This testing activity is planned for autumn 2025 – winter 2026. The exact number of beneficiaries will depend on the budget proposed in the procurement submissions.

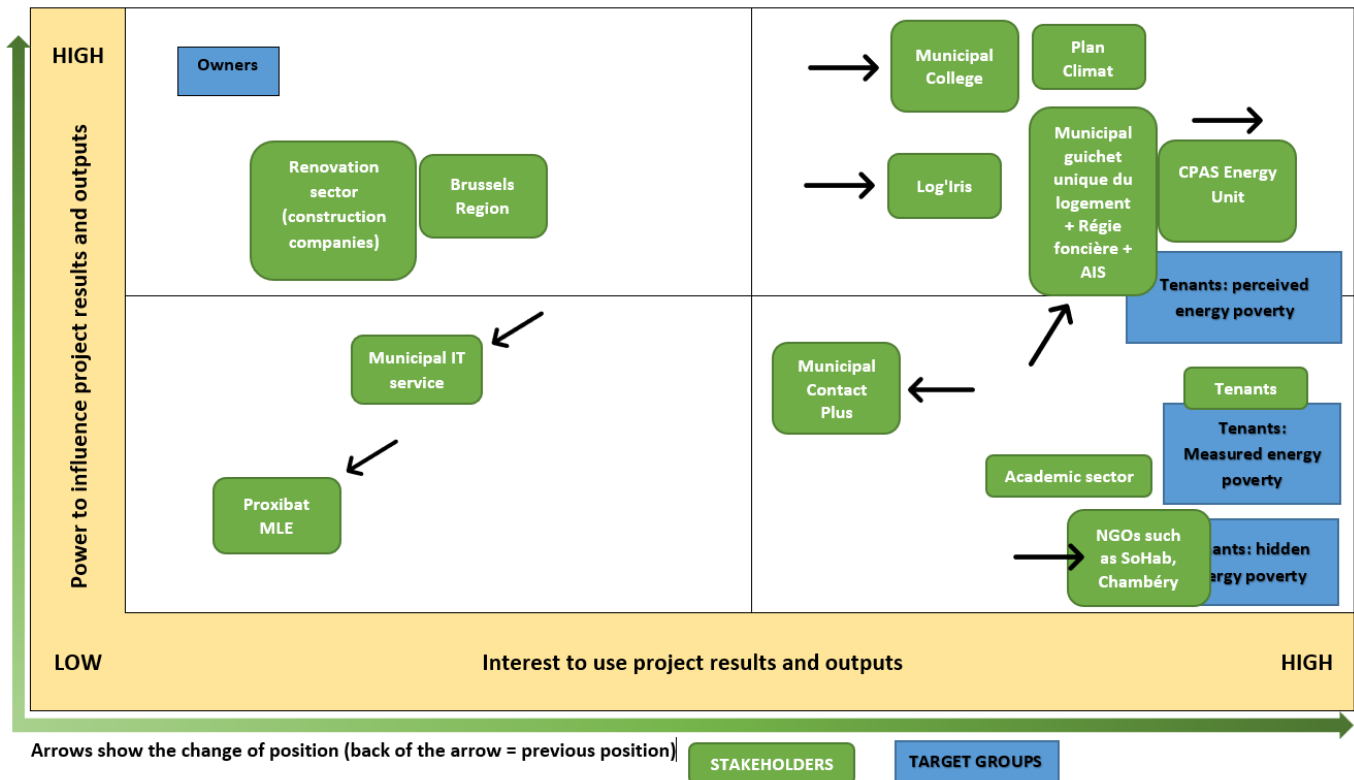
3. The delivery of four information stands on water issues, which were organised in the entrance hall of the municipality on four different dates. The stands, prepared by the Energy Unit of the Public Welfare Centre, applied the concepts learned during the city visit to Getafe in November 2024 and aimed to increase our visibility among citizens visiting the town hall for administrative purposes. These activities, held over four morning and afternoon sessions, provided an opportunity to inform citizens who approached the stand spontaneously about water-related

topics. Such initiatives should not be underestimated, as they help establish valuable and interesting contact with citizens. Although participation was relatively low, the main lesson learned was that mornings should be prioritized, as they attract more visitors than afternoons. It would be wise to organize similar activities more regularly and in busier locations within the municipality. However, the Energy Unit is currently unable to do so on a regular basis due to a lack of time and human resources.

WHO WAS SITTING AROUND THE TABLE IN ETTERBEEK DURING THE PREVIOUS QUARTER



WHO IS SITTING AROUND THE TABLE IN ETTERBEEK - STAKEHOLDERS POWER/INTEREST MATRIX TODAY



Note: Due to active participation in the ULG meetings, interest of NGOs in the project grew.

2.3 Progress made by the ULG of our Transfer city – MAIA (PT)

The logic behind ULG meetings has been shifting between the internal and external ecosystems of the territory. Internally, a more reserved meeting format has been prioritized, allowing for more fluid and effective discussions among municipal units such as the Energy and Social Divisions, the municipal housing company “Espaço Municipal”, and Maia University. This setup supports more agile and targeted decision-making processes.

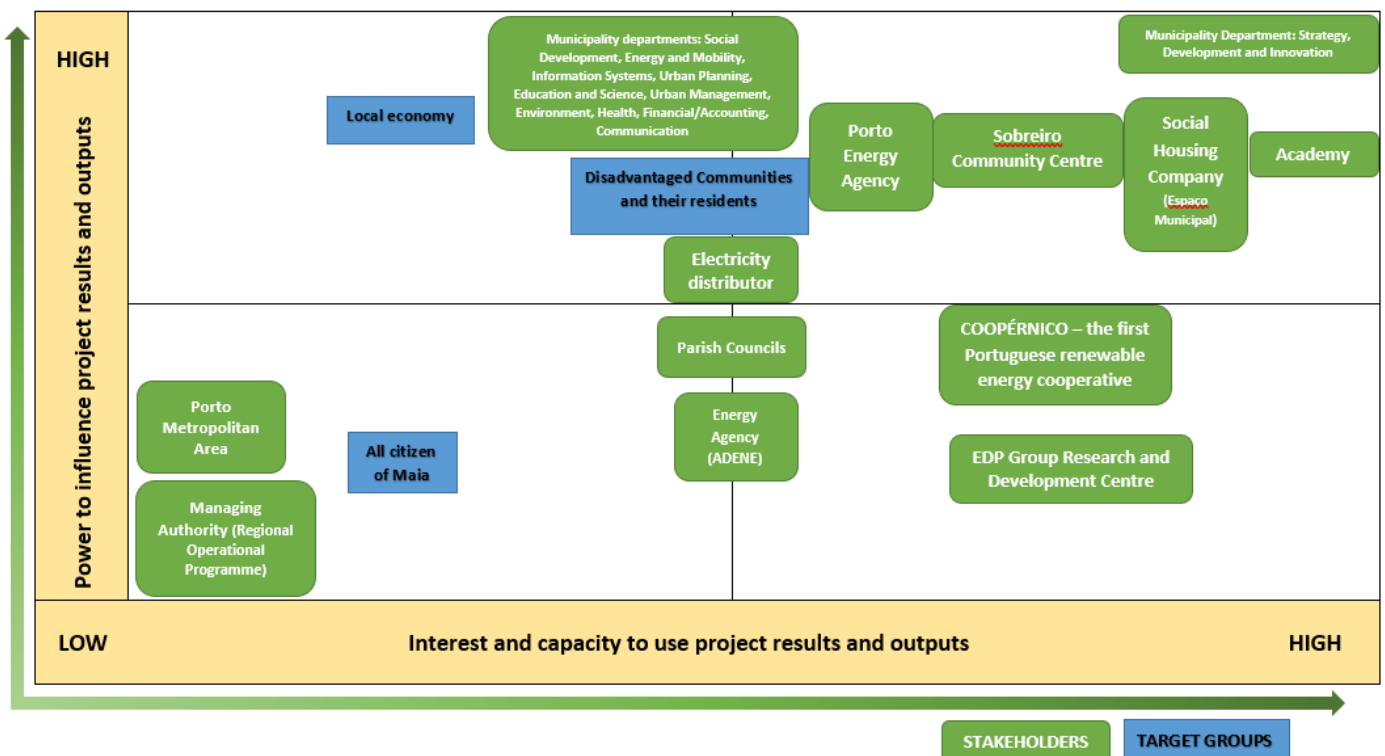
Externally, a decentralized approach has been adopted, with ULG sessions being held across strategic locations in the territory—namely in parishes such as Cidade da Maia, Castêlo da Maia, and, in the near future, Milheirós. This strategy aims to foster closer engagement with local communities and directly involve key territorial actors and citizens.

In addition to internal structures like the Unit of Strategy, Development and Innovation and the Division of Quality and Information Systems, which has also been working on the development and management of databases to support evidence-based planning, we have gradually been involving various relevant stakeholders in both the internal and external ecosystem. These include the political boards of the ten parishes of Maia, local residents, residents’ associations, and national organizations active in the energy sector.

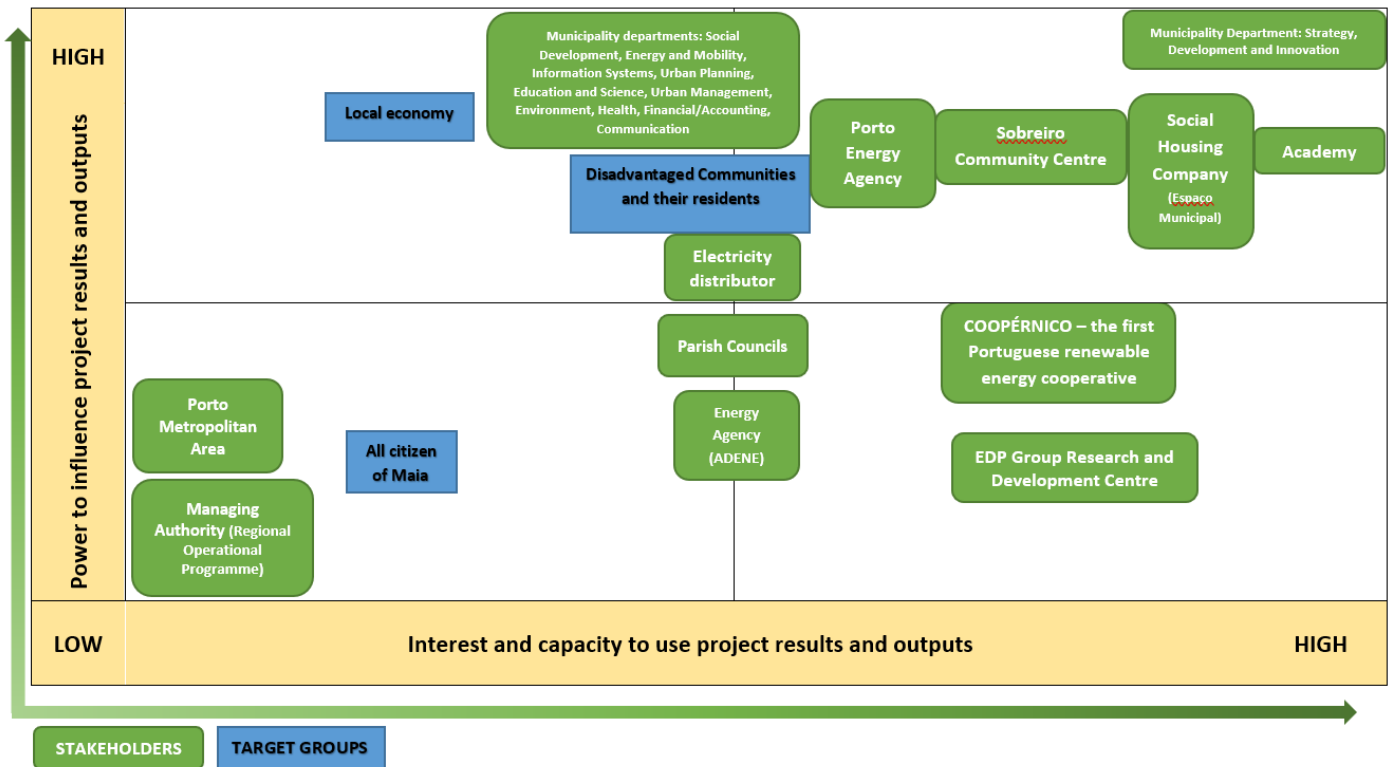
We organized a ULG meeting on July 17, dedicated to the theme "Renewable Energy Communities", with a focus on a practical component aimed at promoting knowledge, sharing best practices, and facilitating dialogue among key stakeholders in this expanding sector. Several members of the ULG were present, as well as local residents from the Castêlo da Maia parish and the president of the residents’ association. Representatives from ADENE (the National Energy Agency) and COOPÉRNICO (a leading energy cooperative in Portugal focused on renewable energy projects) also attended, sharing their experiences, addressing questions, and contributing to the identification of new opportunities in the energy transition. During this meeting, we had the opportunity to present the current status of the project and discuss the way forward.



WHO WAS SITTING AROUND THE TABLE IN MAIA DURING THE PREVIOUS PERIOD



WHO IS SITTING AROUND THE TABLE IN MAIA - STAKEHOLDERS POWER/INTEREST MATRIX TODAY



2.4 Progress made by the ULG of our Transfer city – POMORIE (BG)

Within the period June – August 2025, our team organized and took participation in:

- 4 Urban Local Group meetings - July 14, 2025; Aug 15, 2025; Aug 21, 2025; Sep 12, 2025.
- 1 online meeting with IT company - June 12, 2025
- 2 online meetings with EVN – energy supplier and representatives of the IT company – July 10, 2025; July 15, 2025
- 2 testing actions – Aug 15, 2025; Aug 21, 2025

During the ULG meetings our main topics and questions were related with different types of information. We clarified what we do need to fill-in the gaps. We understood we could receive partial data from our legal department, because all applications for refurbishment if multi-family residential building have been received there. That application consists building files, number of households, assessment of the building state, etc. It is partial data, because it includes predominantly objects in Svoboda district.



Also, we set up good relations with the local Centre for social support and Direction “Social services” – they also have at their disposal valuable information about vulnerable people / families. Unfortunately, their data is also partial, because it covers only people who are self-subscribed to their services. We asked members in our ULG to share and spread the information about our energy poverty project (representatives of Roma people, social employees, etc.). We prepared a very detailed excel table and asked the employees of Centre



for social support to fill it with relevant information in order to enrich our data lake. Due to our monthly discussions, we found out more about the subscribers of the Centre for social support – their fears, problems and characteristics, their needs and expectations about energy poverty.

We started communication with IT company and EVN – energy supplier, aiming to put the data in a clear structure and to receive more information about energy consumption, effectiveness, bills,

poverty, etc. at a household level. Due to that we also started a conversation with our GDPR commission. We are still awaiting their statement – are we allowed to operate with such data at a household level or not.

The transnational meeting in Etterbeek also enriched our knowledge with new methods for assessing and providing assistance to vulnerable groups. We learned more about multi-family residential buildings, their construction files/ papers and their current state. We also made a list with accomplished projects in Pomorie, fighting energy poverty via refurbishment and other energy efficiency measures. Our team managed to differentiate 4 vulnerable groups, typical for Pomorie.

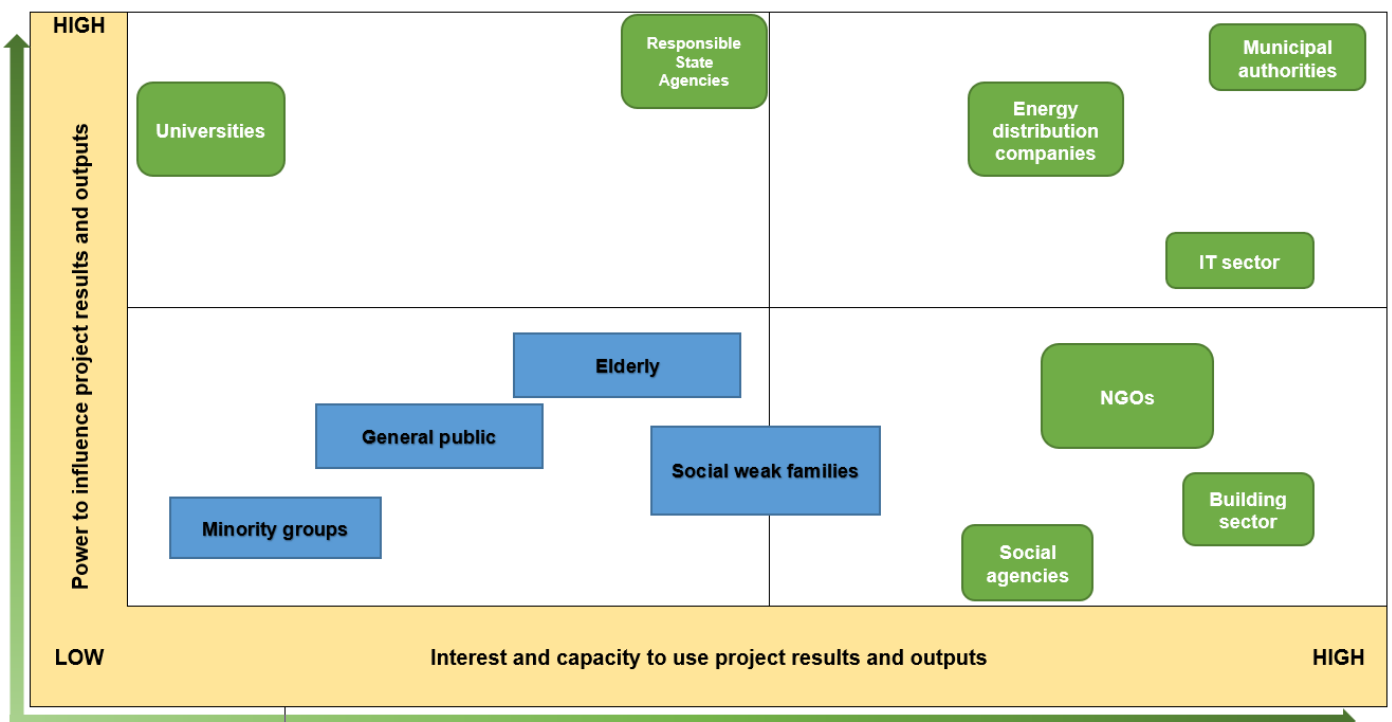
We did 2 types of testing actions:

- Small-scale energy poverty data collection - that actions helped us realize it takes time to get into trust relationships with people, representing vulnerable groups. We noticed that their initial expectation is to receive financial aid or at least some gift. We explained that on that stage the bonus will be reduced energy bills and our help if needed. In general - having a conversation, sharing advices and brochures was fruitful and we are encouraged there will be results.

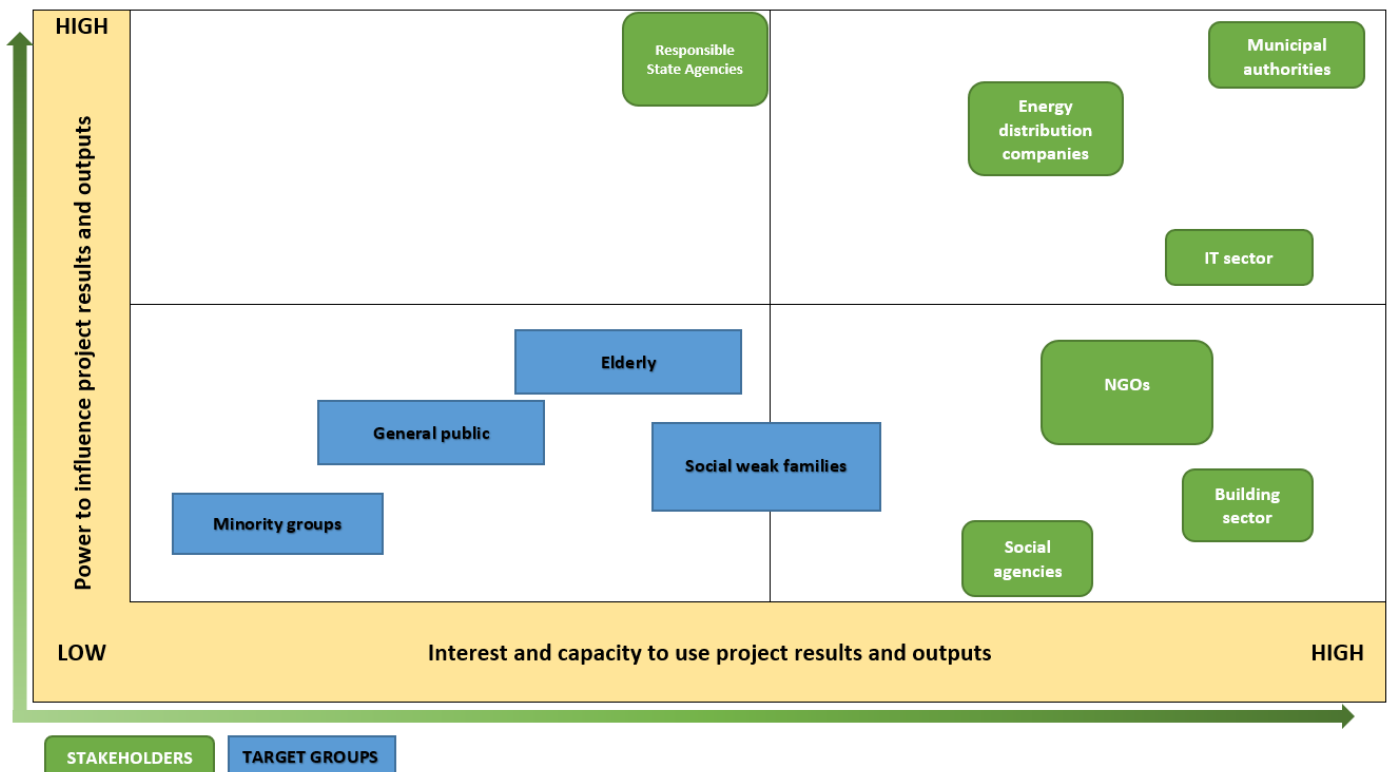
- A table, 2 chairs, paper and pen - The Pomorie team was satisfied with the performance of the testing action. The role plays gave us the opportunity to get acquainted with the process of providing the service, to partly realise what challenges the expert/s in the one-stop-shop will be facing, etc. Every exercise gives us input and is useful for completing the appointed tasks.

In conclusion – this period was dedicated to data collection and knowledge exchange.

WHO WAS SITTING AROUND THE TABLE IN POMORIE DURING THE PREVIOUS PERIOD



WHO IS SITTING AROUND THE TABLE IN POMORIE - STAKEHOLDERS POWER/INTEREST MATRIX TODAY



Note: The Stakeholder Universities was deleted from the Stakeholder Analysis diagram, because they are not able to deliver useful inputs for the project results and none of our social service authorities cooperates with a university.

2.5 Progress made by the ULG of our Transfer city – TRIKALA (GR)

Trikala’s ULG team constitutes a vital component of the EmPowerIngUs project at the local level. It is established with the logic of creating a collaborative framework that brings together key local stakeholders from various sectors, ensuring a comprehensive approach in addressing energy poverty and social inclusion.

Our approach concerning the ULG formation was to identify potential stakeholders. A core and a wider group was formed. The selection of the stakeholders took place under an open procedure to ensure broad representation. The core group (representatives from the Municipality, Municipal Development Agency e-Trikala, Urban Development, Municipal Social Services, Municipal Community Centre), holds primary responsibility for the project’s best practices and knowledge transfer and implementation on local level. The wider group (public companies, utilities, interested individuals) offers support on specific issues and activities, ensuring broad engagement and expertise.

Our criteria for the ULG formation were to consider relevant public agencies, municipal departments, local enterprises, and community organizations based on their essential to the project's success expertise and resources. We aim at organizing multiple ULG meetings, providing participants with ongoing opportunities to discuss project progress, define the local context, identify good practices, monitor implementation, and offer suggestions, where needed.

Three ULG meetings have been held in Trikala as part of the EmPowerIngUs project.

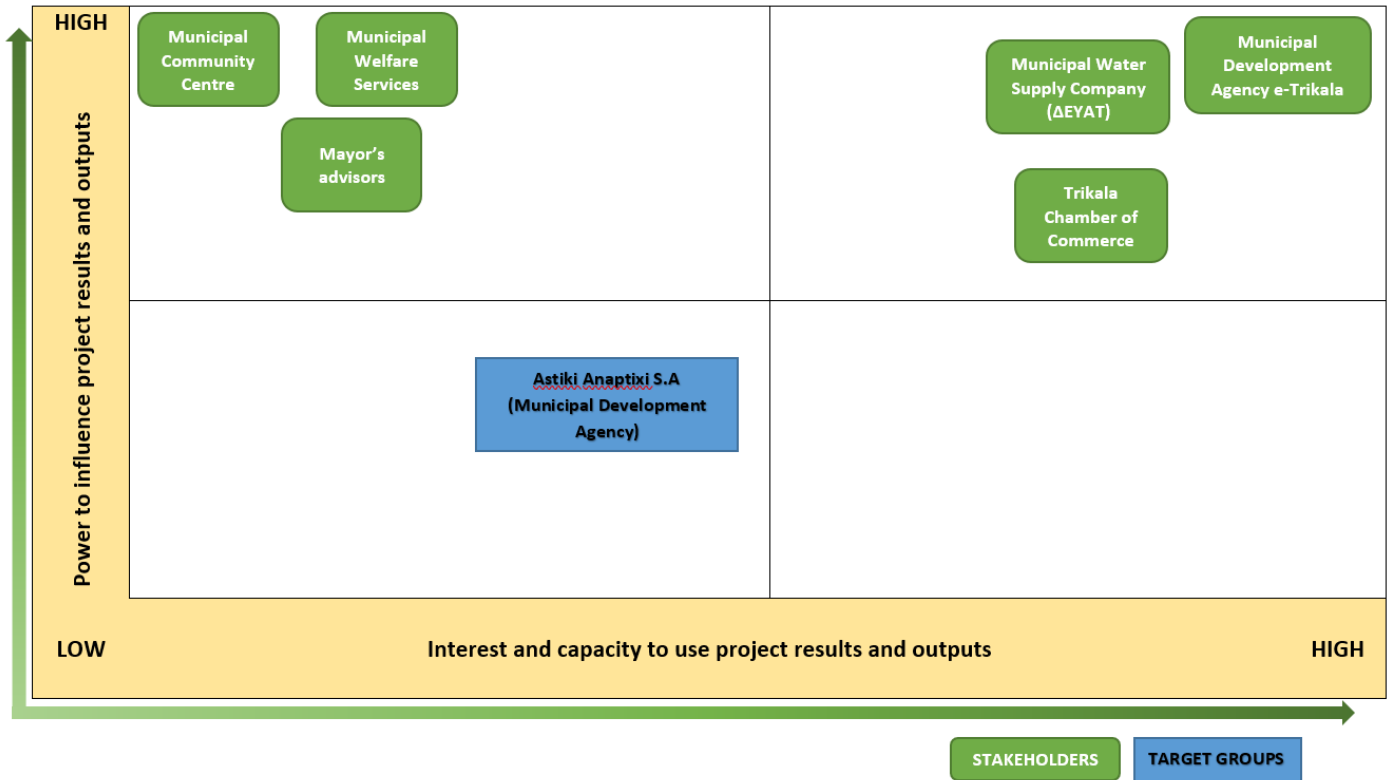
The third ULG meeting was held on 17 June 2025, focusing on transferring the knowledge gained during the 2nd TNM Meeting in Trikala, Greece, and planning Trikala’s Testing Activity. Key takeaways from the session included discussions on data collection strategies, addressing GDPR challenges, the establishment of



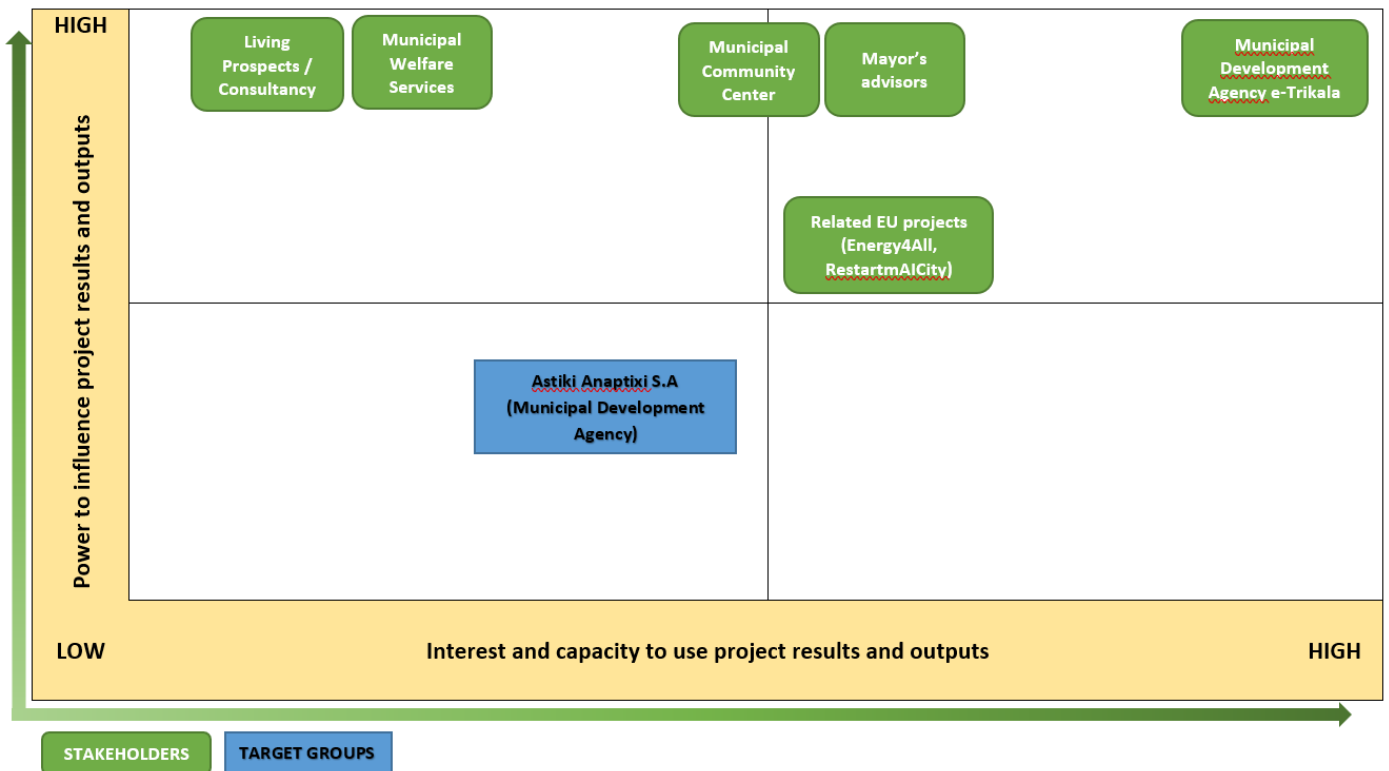
the Municipality's Energy Office, and the organization of an awareness-raising campaign as part of the testing action.

By bringing together diverse actors with complementary expertise, the ULG establishes a collaborative and cross-sectoral environment that strengthens the city's ability to develop and implement effective, locally adapted solutions to energy poverty and social challenges.

WHO WAS SITTING AROUND THE TABLE IN TRIKALA DURING THE PREVIOUS PERIOD



WHO IS SITTING AROUND THE TABLE IN TRIKALA - STAKEHOLDERS POWER/INTEREST MATRIX TODAY



Note:

The Municipal Community Centre advanced significantly along the horizontal interest axis, indicating stronger engagement in the project. In relation to the Energy Office's data collection, the Community Centre / Welfare Services can contribute valuable information on social vulnerability. Its contribution can help identify needs, inform targeted actions, and strengthen the project's overall impact.

Mayor's advisors shifted along both the horizontal and vertical axes of the influence–interest diagram, demonstrating greater engagement in the project. Data collection and management form a core element of the EmPoweringUs initiative, particularly in supporting the Energy Office of Trikala's Municipality. During the 3rd ULG meeting, Mr. Konstantinos Avdelidis proposed solutions to address GDPR challenges by encrypting information received from citizens and ensuring anonymity. These measures aim to safeguard stakeholder data, reduce concerns about privacy, and encourage wider participation. In addition, Mr. Avdelidis is exploring the technical feasibility of consolidating the Social Data Record Platform of Trikala's Community Centre with the platform currently under development for the RestartmAlcity project.

The Municipal Development Agency e-Trikala remains at the forefront of both the influence and interest axes, underscoring its central role in the project's implementation. Through its consistent involvement, the agency demonstrates a strong capacity to influence, coordinate, and maximize the project's outcomes at both the local and transnational levels.

The EU-funded projects Energy4All and RestartmAlCity, in which the Municipality of Trikala is actively involved, play a crucial role in shaping the city's Testing Action. The Energy4All project envisions the establishment of Trikala's Energy Office to address emerging energy challenges faced by its citizens. Meanwhile, as part of the RestartmAlCity project, 1,000 energy kits will be provided to the Energy Office for distribution to vulnerable groups, including citizens and public institutions such as schools. The existence of these projects is vital to the Municipality's testing activities. Building on their initiatives, an awareness-raising event will be organized to inform citizens about key issues such as energy poverty, while also serving as a data collection effort to support the ongoing development of the Energy Office.

Living Prospects joined the ULG Team as a new member during the 3rd ULG meeting. Represented by Konstantinos Karampourniotis, the ULG Coordinator, and Eleni Myrilla, the organization serves as a vital interface between stakeholders and the ULG. Living Prospects plays a key role in organizing meetings, coordinating actions, and, in collaboration with other members, planning and executing the testing activities.

Stakeholders who remained in their original positions on the influence/interest diagram continue to represent key actors in the ULG process. Their position reflects a consistent level of engagement and relevance to the project. These stakeholders have maintained their interest and/or influence throughout the initial phases, actively participating in meetings and discussions. Their steady involvement contributes to continuity and helps anchor the group's strategic direction as the project evolves

3. OUR IMPRESSIONS FROM THE 2nd TRANSNATIONAL NETWORK MEETING IN ETTERBEEK (BELGIUM)

- Well-structured and organized meeting;
- Strategic thinking of the city, namely with the presentation of the Municipal Climate Action Plan;
- Creation of a specific unit dedicated to tackling energy poverty; raising awareness among the population about the best equipment to purchase in order to save on electricity bills (e.g., light bulbs);
- Role-play exercise of Getafe's customer service with a citizen who is interested.
- This should be further improved in future transnational meetings;
- Importance of Renewable Energy Communities in combating energy poverty.



TRIKALA



GETAFE



MAIA



POMORIE



ETTERBEEK



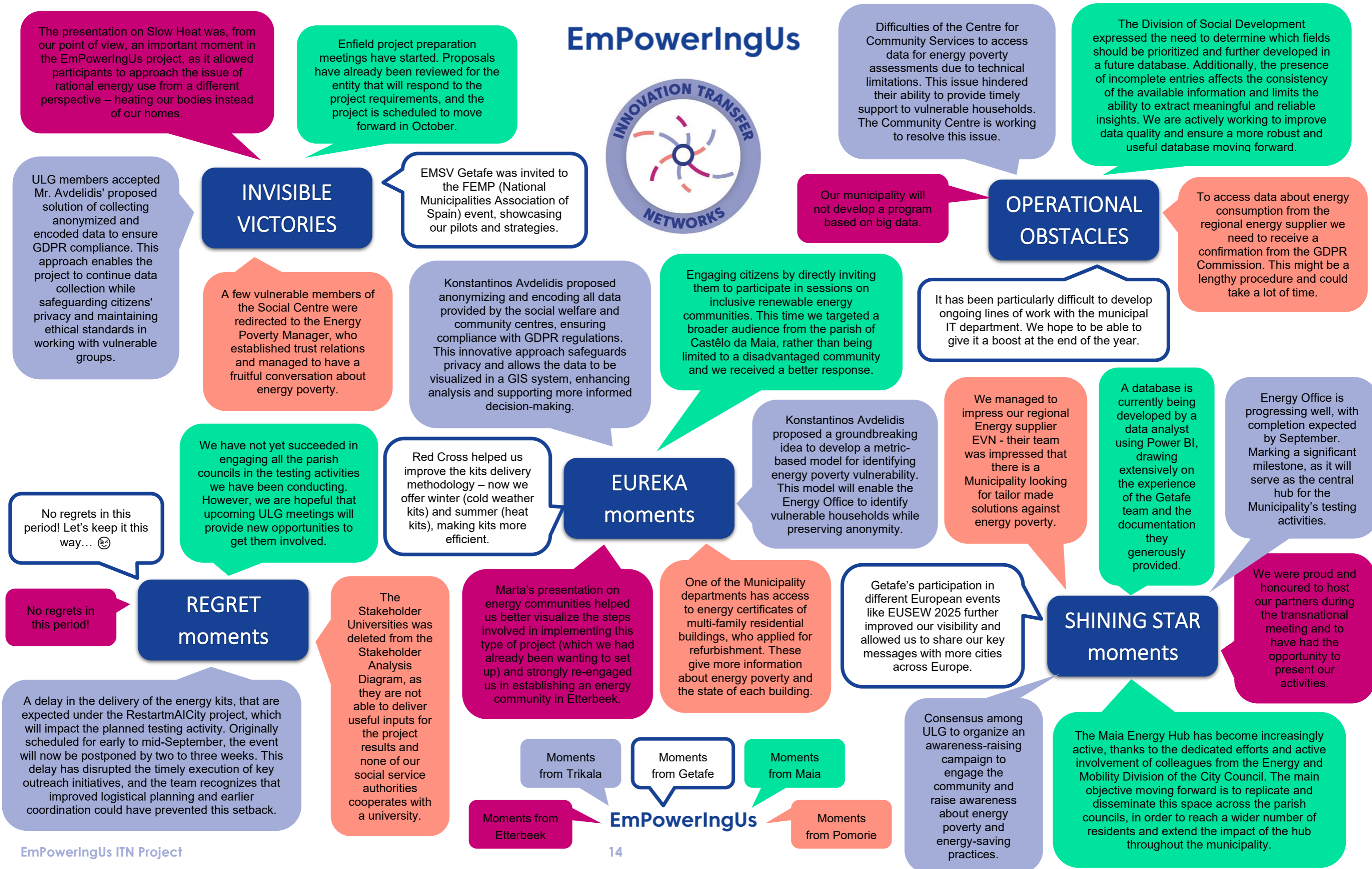
Plan d'Actions Climat: des objectifs ambitieux d'ici 2030

« It is estimated that the replacement of a single room heating by central heating increases the energy required for space heating by about 25% on average. »



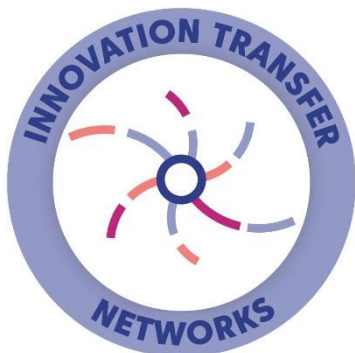
Published in Etterbeek's magazine

4. "HOT DEBRIEF" – OUR KEY TRANSFER PROCESS MOMENTS FROM THIS QUARTER





EPIU Getafe
Hogares saludables



EmPowerIngUs