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CALL FOR PAPERS & PRACTICE:

## Co-Creating the “Right to Energy” in Theory and Practice

ENGAGER Workshop, University of Groningen, Netherlands, 8-9 January 2020

*“Energy services are fundamental to safeguarding the well-being of the Union citizens. Adequate warmth, cooling and lighting, and energy to power appliances are essential services to guarantee a decent standard of living and citizens' health. Furthermore, access to those energy services enables Union citizens to fulfil their potential and enhances social inclusion.”*

EU Electricity Directive 2019/944 of 14 June 2019

### **Background:**

Rising energy bills, the energy transition, forced installation of pre-paid meters, inability to keep homes warm, disconnection of electricity supplies, and an overall lack of (public) control and ownership over energy supply, have been among the reasons why the ‘right to energy’ has gained increased attention as a rallying call in the past years.

Human rights language tends to point out that human dignity might be at stake in relation to the deprivations that people experience. Calls for a ‘right to energy’ signify that energy access is a universal individual concern, a universal right and entitlement, that others have a duty to respect, protect and fulfil. The ‘right to energy’ discourse also conveys that access to energy for well-being is a concern of social justice and of protecting poor and vulnerable of societies.

The purpose of this workshop is to examine and *co-create* the meaning, purpose, rights and duties associated with the ‘right to energy’ in a dialogue across theory and practice. We expressly invite academics from different disciplines and civil society to participate in the investigation of what the ‘right to energy’ adds to debates on European energy poverty specifically, and to concerns about energy access generally.

### **EU COST Action - ENGAGER: European Energy Poverty (2017-2021):**

This Workshop is organized under auspices of working groups 3 and 4 of the ENGAGER COST ACTION “*European Energy Poverty: Agenda Co-Creation and Knowledge Innovation (ENGAGER 2017-2021)*”. This workshop builds on ENGAGER Policy Brief No. 2 on “[The Right to Energy in the EU](#)” (June 2019) produced by WG4 and feeds into work on the ‘right to energy’ to be carried out over the course of the Action until June 2021. See for more information about ENGAGER: <http://www.engager-energy.net/>.

## The Call for Papers & Practices

We warmly invite submissions from activists, academics, stakeholders, and civil society representatives from EU COST members and non-members across Europe to participate in this Workshop.

Those selected to participate in the Workshop may be eligible for full reimbursement of travel and accommodation costs for the workshop according to the [COST Vademecum](#). 20 presenters are expected to be selected (balancing the number between the call for papers and practice).

Submission from non-EU participants are certainly welcome. Please contact the organizers for more information about reimbursement opportunities.

### THE CALL FOR PAPERS:

**Scholars across different disciplines** are warmly invited to submit their proposals for critical explorations of the right to energy according to their discipline: What does the right to energy mean in your discipline? Which aspects are contested, which are not? What type of entitlements and duties are included? Which opportunities and challenges arise when invoking rights-based language? Does the 'right to energy' add anything in comparison to other concepts that are explored in theory and practice, such as 'energy justice', 'energy democracy', 'energy poverty' or 'energy capabilities'?

### THE CALL FOR PRACTICES:

**NGOs, politicians, stakeholders, and other civil society representatives** are warmly invited to submit their examples or questions about their work on the 'right to energy' in practice: Which opportunities, challenges and questions do you encounter in using rights-based language? What are the most important challenges and obstacles for realizing the 'right to energy' in practice? Which actions need to be improved or prioritized? Which types of claims must be definitely included? What practices must be challenged?

Please note that civil society representatives can either propose a paper/presentation on, or submit a proposal for a practical workshop around a specific case-study or question that they would like to discuss with participants (slots of up to 1,5 hours).

### OUTPUTS FROM THE WORKSHOP:

This workshop aims to foster a community of active and interested persons/organizations around the concept of the 'right to energy' and to start a clear dialogue on the merits of using this concept in addressing energy poverty. The organizers also plan to pursue **one or more publications** to be decided at a later point and in consultation with the participants in the Workshop.

**Examples of topics to be raised in the workshop:**

Key dimensions of the right to energy	Key questions on the right to energy
Content and purposes of the right	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the best or most appropriate formulation of the right to energy?</li> <li>• Which entitlements are to be included and how, e.g. 'affordable', 'clean', 'reliable', 'basic' access, or access to energy 'supply' or 'services'?</li> </ul>
Disconnections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under which circumstances, if any, can disconnections occur?</li> <li>• How are payments for energy supply, if any, secured?</li> </ul>
Inclusivity, vulnerability, justice, distribution, empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can <i>all</i> persons benefit from and be included in energy service provision, in a universal and non-discriminatory manner?</li> <li>• How can the right to energy ensure democratic control over energy?</li> <li>• How to ensure rights of access to energy for vulnerable households, including in a context of the energy transition and in relation to local energy communities which take generation, distribution and consumption into their own hands?</li> <li>• Are benefits and burdens of universal services provision fairly divided amongst members of the society/ community?</li> <li>• How to provide 'access to justice' for the energy poor?</li> <li>• How does the right to energy intersect with other concepts, such as 'energy justice'?</li> </ul>

**Deadlines for submissions of abstracts:**

Proposals for papers or workshops can be submitted by means of an **abstract** describing the content of the paper or workshop (max. 500-1000 words) and a **short bio** describing your background and current institutional affiliation (max. 150 words). Please submit your abstract and short bio via email by **Friday 25 October 2019** via: [right2energy2020@gmail.com](mailto:right2energy2020@gmail.com).

Deadline for submission of abstracts or workshop proposals	25 October 2019
Selection of participants	1 November 2019
Deadline for extended proposals (for selected participants)	15 December 2019
Workshop	8-9 January 2020

For any other queries, please feel free to contact lead co-organisers Marlies Hesselman ([m.m.e.hesselman@rug.nl](mailto:m.m.e.hesselman@rug.nl)) or Anaïs Varo ([anais.varo@udg.edu](mailto:anais.varo@udg.edu)).