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# ENERGY CITIZENSHIP IN LATVIA: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN POLICY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC PRACTICE

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**Abstract** – The analysis builds on the conceptual framework developed within the EnergyPROSPECTS project and applies a PESTEL approach to examine the political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal conditions shaping energy citizenship at the national level. The study is based on systematic desk research, combining EU-level datasets, national policy and legal documents, official statistics, and survey evidence on household energy practices, socio-economic conditions, and public attitudes. The results show that Latvia has established a broadly supportive policy and legal framework for energy citizenship, including formal alignment with EU energy and climate targets, recent regulatory reforms recognising active consumers and energy communities, and rapid growth in household-level renewable energy adoption, particularly solar photovoltaics. However, this enabling framework predominantly supports individualised and market-based forms of participation. Collective and community-based energy citizenship remains underdeveloped in practice. Key socio-economic constraints limiting broader participation include high energy price volatility, declining household purchasing power during the recent energy crisis, and persistent income inequalities that restrict the capacity of households to invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies. Social factors further constrain engagement, including low levels of climate and energy literacy, limited experience with collective self-organisation, and relatively low public trust in political and administrative institutions. At the local level, constrained administrative capacity and delayed implementation of secondary regulations for energy communities further hinder the translation of formal policy enablement into practice. The Latvian case illustrates a broader challenge in European energy transitions: a gap between the normative promotion of active, collective energy citizenship at the policy level and the socio-economic and institutional conditions that shape citizens' actual opportunities for participation. By explicitly linking national-level PESTEL conditions with observed patterns of energy citizenship, this study contributes to a more differentiated understanding of how energy citizenship is structured, constrained, and realised in practice.

**Keywords** – *Energy citizenship; energy communities; energy transition; EU energy policy; Latvia; PESTEL analysis; socio-economic constraints*

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