

# Activity report 2017

RURENER



## A Word from the Board

« To be completed – Opening statement GA 18 » - Tibor.

## Composition of the Board of Directors

**Tibor Kócse**, Mayor of the Village of Nagypáli – Hungary

**Philippe Cortès**, CEO of Grange Solaire – France

**Vassiliki Kazana**, Professor at Eastern Macedonia & Thrace Institute of Tech – Greece

**Aline Brachet**, Independent at APPIA-CAPACITY – France

**Jacky Aignel**, Mayor of Commune Nouvelle Le Mené – France

**Kostas Sioulas**, Centre for Renewable Energy Sources – Greece

**Christos Eliades**, President of PESAP – Cyprus

**Eric Malatray**, Director of Communauté d'agglomération Ouest Rhodanien – France

**Frédéric Praillet**, Project manager at the APERe – Belgium

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**2017 came to** an end after 8 intense months busy with the projects, networking activities, and meetings with members and partners. One key moment this year was the arrival of Céline in May. She is RURENER's European Coordinator and in charge of the "2017, 2018, 2019, Years of Innovation for Rural Energy" project. Here is what you will find in the activity report:



**Time for action** in 2017! After a year of planning in 2016, it is time for RURENER to take action. This new phase translates into a brand-new communication strategy and the return of RURENER on social media. But most of all, 2017 was the first year for the conduct of the "2017, 2018, 2019, Years of Innovation for Rural Energy" project, meaning the building of new cooperation projects, participation in European events and development of territorial tools for rural communities committed to the energy transition.

**The main events** this year were the TEPOS (POSitive Energy Territories) Days in Figeac (France) in September, the Cooperation Days in Le Grau du Roi (France) in November and the Covenant of Mayors' Conference - for which RURENER was a speaker - in the Xunta de Galicia (Spain) in December. Our presence in Brussels with participation in meetings with the European Countryside Movement (ECM) reinforced our position at the European level. Last but not least, RURENER General Assembly 2017 took place in Cyprus in November, thanks to our precious members of the PESAP organization.

**And also** in this report, you will find the presentation of the financial balance for the year, the perspectives and foreseen development for 2018, because to move forward, we must look to the future! This activity report summarizes the activities that took place in 2017 and that constitute a solid basis for what we hope to be a promising future.

# Strengthening the Network



A network needs movement to stay alive, and that is what we have done in 2017: reinforcing the relationships with our current members, reviving old ones and building new ones. To do so, there is nothing like meeting partners face to face. Highlights on the best encounters of 2017...

## ... With territories

**Philippe Cham**, *Saint Christophe d'Allier, Communauté de Communes Cayres Pradelles, France*

Philippe wishes to engage his territory to the energy transition that he sees as a true opportunity "There is a real potential with our farmers but nothing is structured yet". RURENER will support them in this effort.



**Eric Malatray and his team**, *Communauté d'agglomération de l'Ouest Rhodanien (COR), France*



Territory that has been committed to the energy transition for some years, the COR relies on RURENER to promote its actions in Brussels, support the building of cooperation projects with European territories and facilitate the sharing of good practices at the EU level.

**Zsuzsanna Horvath**, *Kispáli, Hungary*

We met the Mayor of the small village of Kispáli in Hungary during RURENER General Assembly. She is very interested in the energy transition even though her village has less than 200 inhabitants and very little financial and technical means. However, Kispáli intends to work with its neighbor, Nagypáli, where the Mayor is also the President of RURENER and knows a couple of things about energy, and to benefit from its experience.



**Zsolt Mihály Kaczor et Zsolt Nándor Farsang**, *Győrvar, Hungary*



Also introduced during RURENER General Assembly at the end of 2017, the mayor of Győrvar, Zsolt Mihály Kaczor, and his deputy have seen what Nagypáli has achieved and are thinking about elaborating their own energy strategy. Becoming a member of RURENER could be a good way to boost the process!

**Vincent Turpinat and Jean-Jacques Bigouret**, local representatives of the West of the Creuse department in France

These two local representatives decided to take up the challenge of the energy transition by participating in the field study tour to Cyprus to see what is done in Europe. They took part in RURENER General Assembly and realized that rural territories face the same challenges, whether that's in the Central mountain range of France or in the Troodos mountain range of Cyprus... And that local innovation is everywhere! We can count on them to spread the word to other local representatives in Creuse and take action. Get ready for a General Assembly in Creuse next year!



**Florian Lougnon**, Pays de Combraille en Marche, France



Energy technician in the West of Creuse territory, Florian is the operational arm of Vincent and Jean-Jacques. He sees potential in the territory that holds a lot of projects and great ambitions. He is a valuable asset for local representatives who count on him to seize the opportunities of the energy transition for the territory. As a pragmatist, Florian always keeps in mind concrete actions to implement and promotes a bottom-up approach, giving citizens the place they deserve in this transition.

**Christos Eliades and Kyriakos Georgiou**, PESAP, Cyprus

President of the PESAP organization and professor at the University of Nicosia, Christos and Kyriakos are the ones to thank for the success of the 2017 General Assembly. All we can say is that Cypriots know how to host a European event with high level speakers and to share their culture. We send them a big thank you and we look forward to working together again!



**Karine Cappelle and Anaïs Olivier**, PETR Centre Ouest Aveyron, France



The PETR (Pole of Rural and Territorial Balance) Centre Ouest Aveyron gathers 8 Associations of Communities, which make it a pretty large territory. Each territory of the PETR has its own approach to energy challenges and ends up in a myriad of small projects that lack territorial cohesion. The PETR seeks to implement its "Project of Territory", an integrated approach involving citizens, and to evaluate the local impact of its actions. RURENER will give them a hand in 2018.

**Patrick Herrero, Thomas Robert and Alice Croizé**, *Communauté de Communes des Monts du Lyonnais, France*



Monts du Lyonnais territory is not a new comer to the energy transition. Their specialty? Energy efficiency in buildings and building renovation ever since their launch of the platform "Eco-habitat Park" in 2007. The territory is open to Europe and took part in the CESBA-Alps European project that aims to harmonize monitoring-evaluation indicators on energy renovation in the Alpine Space. Participatory initiatives (solar PV) are also taking place in the territory involving all local stakeholders and strengthening territorial cohesion. Next step: energy storage? There is much more to do, and they are on it!



**Dominique Olivier and Meryl Parisse**, *Fermes de Figeac/Figeacteurs, France*



Dominique and Meryl are at the heart of the agricultural cooperative Fermes de Figeac and its associated organization Figeacteurs. About 10 years ago, the cooperative seized the opportunity to develop renewable energy projects to diversify the incomes of farmers and invest



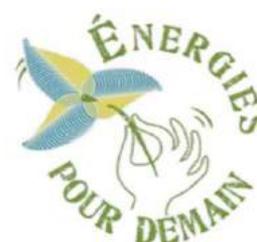
in local energy for social, economic and environmental positive impacts on the territory. A first wind farm was developed thanks to participatory funding, followed by solar panels on farm roofs. Today, the organization Figeacteurs focuses on energy transition projects and to reach out to all local citizens - and not just farmers. A promising initiative to discover during a field study tour!

### ... With organizations and partner networks

**The team of Energies pour Demain**, *Peyrelevade, PNR de Millevaches en Limousin, France*

Located in Peyrelevade (France), the organization Energie pour Demain is boosted by an energetic team and develops actions on the whole Regional Natural Park of Millevaches en Limousin (Central France). Energy efficiency and building renovations are at the heart of their actions... But not only:

<http://www.energiespourdemain.fr/>



**Johanna d'Heroncourt and Frédéric Praillet**, *APERe, Brussels, Belgium*



The APERe, Association for the Promotion of Renewable Energies supports the development of territorial projects for the energy transition and the involvement of citizens. By promoting a local, bottom-up approach and raising awareness of local populations, the APERe is a recommendation in the Walloon Region. Johanna and Frédéric are our contact persons as they are in charge of development and networking at the EU level. We hope to build new projects together, more specifically on the topics of self-consumption and territorial dialogue in which they are very much interested. Another promising partnership. More information on their website: <http://apere.org/fr>



**Etienne Viénot**, *Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Energie Environnement (AURAEE), France*



The Regional Energy and Environment Agency AURAEE cannot be overlooked when it comes to the energy transition in the Auvergne Rhône-Alpes region... And beyond! Our meeting with Etienne Viénot, project manager on "Sustainable Buildings and European and International Projects" gave us a technical support in the building of our monitoring-evaluation approach. This collaboration initiated a new partnership to best support rural territories in the region in the conduct of the energy transition. <http://www.auvergnerhonealpes-ee.fr>

**Arthur Hinsch**, *Go100% Renewable Energy, International*

Coordinator of the "Go100% Renewable Energy" network until the first semester of 2018, Arthur was our entry point to share our collection of best practices on the online platform that lists transition territories in the world: <http://www.go100re.net/map/>. The field study tours that we are building at RURENER will be promoted on the platform to ensure a broad visibility of these good practices in rural areas of Europe. It is a first step to mobilize the synergies in our approaches.



**Eamon O'Hara**, *Ecolise, Europe*



It is through the European Association for Information on Local Development (AEIDL) that we got in touch with Eamon, the executive director of Ecolise. Ecolise is the European Network for Community Led Initiatives on Climate Change and Sustainability, a privileged partner at the EU level with whom we already foresee the organization of joint events in Brussels! <http://www.ecolise.eu/>

## RURENER 2.0



To promote the network and its members, RURENER pulled out all the stops in communication in 2017!

- ❖ A **new communication document** presenting the network and ongoing project was released. This document was edited in English and French to reach territories not only in France, but in the broader Europe. In this document you can also find testimonies from RURENER Board and founding members who have seen the network evolve since 2008. A document to read and share without reserve, available in printed version and online.
- ❖ **RURENER Energetik Talk**, our newsletter that comes out every two months to highlight a member of the network and an innovative project, while sharing information on the network's event and the activities of its members. A good way to stay in touch, create new connections and facilitate the exchange of good practices. To share your project, just send an email to [contact@rurener.eu](mailto:contact@rurener.eu) with details and you may be in the next Newsletter! Launched in May-June 2017, over 100 subscribers are reading it. You can subscribe directly on the RURENER website or on your membership form.
- ❖ **RURENER website** - [www.rurener.eu](http://www.rurener.eu) - looks brand new! A well-deserved dusting to promote dematerialized communication between rural territories. The new website shows RURENER members, past and current projects, and even has a corner dedicated to cooperation on which visitors are invited to share their project ideas. And if you do not want to miss any event on rural energy in Europe, you can check the online calendar. Members can also complete the calendar with their own local events on rural energy.

## RURENER in Brussels



One of our missions is to break down the barrier between local action and European policies. It is not always easy to have a real dialogue between the territories, where actions are implemented, and the European institutions, where programmes, policies and funding are decided. By giving rural territories the opportunity to be visible in Brussels, RURENER works for a better recognition of rural challenges and a better integration of rural areas in EU policies. At the local level, by inviting to the exchange of experience and cooperation, RURENER works towards a more efficient use of European programmes with an improved local impact.

This year, the dialogue between local and European levels translated into:

- ❖ **At the EU level**, RURENER's participation in European events in Brussels (see Events) and RURENER's involvement in the collaborative platform of the European Countryside Movement (ECM) for the writing of two communications to support integrated rural development.
- ❖ **At the local level**, through the conduct of the "2017, 2018, 2019, Year of Innovation for Rural Energy" project, especially with the "Cooperation" component (see: Current project).

## Current Project

The project "2017, 2018, 2019, Year of Innovation for Rural Energy" started on May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017 and is funded at 70% by the French State (FNADT) and the French Region Nouvelle-Aquitaine. This project has four components:



- ❖ **Monitoring evaluation of territorial impact**: Definition of a local and comparative approach for the monitoring evaluation of impact of territorial energy strategies and policies. The goal is to identify key indicators that are (1) easily measurable, not to add weight on the shoulders of the local technicians, (2) informative about the social, economic and environmental impacts (with no pretention of exhaustivity), and (3) easy to apprehend for technicians, elected representatives, citizens, to facilitate communication with local stakeholders. The support of Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Energie Environnement through the project CESBA-Alps helped us identify 4 indicators (2 economic indicators, 1 social indicator and 1 environmental indicator) that will be tested on the experimentation territories throughout 2018.
- ❖ **Cooperation Europe**: Through this component, RURENER offers its expertise in the building of cooperation projects to local authorities and other entities wishing to develop cooperation projects on rural energy. This support encompasses, on the one hand, the definition of the project and the administrative aspect (writing, highlighting of funding opportunities like European calls for projects, LEADER, etc), and on the other hand, the identification and building of the partnership thanks to the existing network of RURENER. In 2017, we collected topics of interest for public authorities and LAGs interested in cooperation to fasten the energy transition. The building of European projects for the H2020 and Interreg SUDOE programmes has been initiated by RURENER.

- ❖ **Field Study Tours:** This action seeks to answer the wish of many rural territories to take part in field study tours on the energy transition in Europe to broaden their perspectives. Indeed, numerous territories want to commit to the energy transition but the first step is hard to make, especially if all local actors are not ready. As demonstrated by RURENER's experience, there is nothing like concrete demonstration to convince stakeholders to take action. The main barrier to the energy transition is not technology anymore, nor economic reasons (or merely), but very often lack of political will. Elected representatives are not energy specialists and for many of them the energy transition looks like a remote concept, far from everyday problems... Not that far actually! After identifying pilot territories for the energy transition in Europe, RURENER will organize field study tours to facilitate connections between rural areas, basing the exchanges on concrete projects and achievements. The tours will be promoted in a European guide of field study tours on rural energy. In 2017, we identified pilot territories and field study tours will be structured throughout 2018.
  
- ❖ **European lobbying:** Transversal to the project, the goal of this action is to promote local innovations at the EU level throughout the project and during a final European event. Actions 1, 2 and 3 feed the European lobbying: the results of these actions will be promoted in European events in Brussels and during the final event to conclude the project. This event will allow the meeting of local and European decision-makers, for a better recognition of rural territories in the EU and to boost local action. In 2017, RURENER took part in communications for an integrated approach of rural development through the ECM and participated in the European Days for Sustainable Development (Ecolise). More events are scheduled in 2018: the European Days for the Energy Transition in Geneva (January) and the European Sustainable Energy Week (June).

## Project building



**Territorial Dialogue and citizen's consultation on territorial energy projects** – *Investment in the Future Programme (PIA), proposal "HAPPI MONTANA" coordinated by Maceo*

As part of the 3rd Investment in the Future Programme (PIA) in France, the organization Macéo built a consortium of stakeholders in the French Massif Central to write a common proposal: HAPPI MONTANA. This proposal gathers over 60 stakeholders and local projects on a diversity of topics related to rural development, and the energy transition is one of them. In this context and to reinforce the participative dimension of the proposal and local impact, RURENER develops a project to conduct a territorial dialogue in energy projects of other partners. The project seeks to increase social acceptance of energy projects and the sense of ownership of local citizens to allow such projects to change scale and to fasten the energy transition.

### **COLEOPTER: Territorial Dialogue for Optimization of Local Policies on Rural Energy – European programme Interreg SUDOE**

The third call for projects of the Interreg SUDOE programme will be open in 2018. In order to encourage new project leaders to submit projects, the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region, the Regional Council of Occitanie and the programme Europ'act launched a Call for Expression of Interest to support these new leaders in the building of their proposal. RURENER's project COLEOPTER was selected to benefit from this support from November 2017 to April 2018. The project will be finalized in 2018 but partners have already been identified in Spain and Portugal. The goal of COLEOPTER is to develop a concerted approach of renovation work in public buildings, with 4 experimentation sites (Andorra, Spain, Portugal, France) and a transferable methodology. To be continued...

### **CEnergyC: Cooperative Energy Cluster – European programme H2020**

The Research Institute Ecole des Mines of Saint Etienne invited RURENER to take part in an innovative project on industrial ecology. RURENER will be part of the consortium and in charge of dissemination and moderation of the community of interest for the project. In charge of submission, RURENER is also responsible for identifying a French experimentation site. The project wishes to develop a sustainable model of SMEs Cluster around a collaborative management of energy. The idea is to optimize energy costs among SMEs, limit energy consumptions and complement with local production of renewable energy thanks to a smart information and data management system. The project will be submitted on April 5th 2018, let's get to work!

## Events

### **General Assembly of Energies pour Demain (Energie pour Demain)**

Date: June 7th 2017

Place: Peyrelevade, France

Céline met with the team, Energies pour Demain, for the first time during their general assembly in Peyrelevade (town that is also a founding member of RURENER). The association has worked with RURENER in the past on the Isole Toit project (renovation platform, see RURENER website) that has been continued and extended since. Taking part in the GA was a good (re)introduction of RURENER to the team of Energies pour Demain and to other local players (Pierre Coutaud, mayor of Peyrelevade, among others). In addition of new contacts, we also learned about the actions of the organization (energy efficiency in buildings and awareness raising). The lack of visibility and the challenge to keep members mobilized are two difficulties that Energies pour Demain has to face. RURENER could support them by promoting their approach at the regional and EU levels.





## European Day of Sustainable Communities (Ecolise)

Date: September 21st - 22nd 2017

Place: European Economic and Social Committee, Brussels, Belgium

We asked our members to share their own events on September 22<sup>nd</sup> for the European Day of Sustainable Communities. The launch of electric vehicles in Figeac (Lot, France) organized by Figeacteurs was referenced as one of the local actions organized all around Europe on that day. It was highlighted during the introduction of the event on September 21<sup>st</sup>. Besides this visibility, the event allowed us to reinforce our relationship with Ecolise and to meet other European networks and communities. We are discussing the organization of a joint event with Ecolise in the future on the topic of local action in rural territories for the energy transition.



## National Days for Positive Energy Territories (TEPOS network)

Date: September 27th, 28th, 29th 2017

Place: Figeac, France



Many French territories committed to the energy transition attended this 3-day event. It was a good opportunity for RURENER to be introduced to new rural territories and to strengthen our relationships with others (Pays de Combraille en Marche, Regional

Natural Park of Millevaches en Limousin, the Commune Nouvelle Le Mené). In addition, the visit of the agricultural cooperative Fermes de Figeac that developed a wind power plant, solar PV, a wood fueled heat network and anaerobic digestion plants (ongoing) established the bases of a future field study tour to share their approach. Finally, we discussed possible collaborations with the TEPOS network in current and future actions, and the best ways to mobilize the synergies of our two networks that used to

work together much more (100%RES Communities, more info on RURENER website and on <http://www.100-res-communities.eu/>).





## The Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (Xunta de Galicia)

Date: November 28th 2017

Place: A Coruña, Spain (Catalunya)

RURENER was invited by the Xunta de Galicia to talk at this conference in A Coruña to present opportunities offered by the energy transition to local representatives. We presented our actions for the 100%RES Communities project and current actions of RURENER, and we asked Le Mené to come with us to give a concrete illustration. Kévin Porée, the energy technician of Le Mené (member of RURENER since 2008) came prepared with solid arguments and pictures to make his case. This conference gave RURENER more visibility in Galicia (that was not part of the network). It was an opportunity to make new connections with the other speakers from the EU Commission, the FEDARENE and the Office of the Covenant of Mayors. The only regret was not to be able to stay longer to discuss with the local representatives that attended the conference but we will follow the advancements of their engagement very closely through the Xunta de Galicia and offer our support to the rural communities.



## European LEADER Cooperation Days (Réseau Rural)

Date: December 5th -6th 2017

Place: Grau du Roi, France



Two days to discuss European cooperation and meet Local Action Groups (LAGs) from all over France and Europe. We connected with LAGs interested in developing cooperation projects on the topic of energy (Lozère, Ardèche, Pyrenees, Corsica in France; Croatia, Spain, Hungary). We moderated one of the "cooperation fair" workshops on the topic of environment and energy to facilitate the meeting of LAGs interested in the subject and to initiate partnerships. The most popular subjects were the promotion of local wood, local food systems, and public-private partnerships to optimize



consumption/production of energy locally. During the event we reconnected with former partner the ARCA network (Catalunya). We continue to communicate with two LAGs interested in obtaining RURENER support through the "2017, 2018, 2019, Years of Innovation for Rural Energy" project.





## **RURENER General Assembly 2017**

Date: November 16th -19th 2017

Place: Larnaca and Troodos, Cyprus

A successful General Assembly Meeting thanks to the warm welcome of our partners from Cyprus: the PESAP organization (Organization of Former Residents of Pitsilia (Apodimoi)). The first day was busy with conferences in the morning, presenting the context in Cyprus - energy and development challenges of rural areas (Troodos region) -, the local initiatives and European projects (ongoing and to come). The Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and the Environment made an appearance to support the actions of the RURENER network and PESAP, and to encourage all stakeholders taking action for the energy transition. RURENER General Assembly took place in the afternoon and was enriched by the intervention of the European experts Etienne Viénot (Regional Energy Agency in Auvergne Rhône Alpes, France) and Gérard Peltre (Rural Environment Development). On Saturday, we took a bus to visit the island and energy project's sites, and to meet local elected representatives in a festive atmosphere. Our only regret is the lack of time for in-depth discussion on, but we brought back cooperation ideas and strong connections between the participants.





## Financial balance and budget projections

2017 has been a decisive year for RURENER in that it has hired its first employee, Céline Seince, who became the European coordinator of the network. The support of the association CDOS (France) helped us take up our new administrative challenges. Céline was officially hired on May 1st 2017, which explains why this activity report focuses on only 8 months of action (May to December).

The financial balance in 2017 is largely positive (see annex). This is due to the 15,000€ bank loan that was necessary to start the project “2017, 2018, 2019, Years of Innovation for Rural Energy” and to the limited expenses during the first months of the project. Membership fees amount for a total of 3,800€, which is slightly higher than in 2016 (3,600€) but remains too low. This result can be explained by the late call for collection of membership fees and the lack of activity of the network for the 8 months (September 2016 to May 2017). The goal in 2018 is to reach 20 members (more than twice the 9 current members), in at least 10 European countries (in 2017 only 5 countries were represented), for 10,000€ in membership fees.

RURENER's economic model is based on membership fees, project funding and co-funding from beneficiaries which makes the network very fragile and limits our long-term vision. In 2018, we will investigate new economic opportunities and we will consider new economic models to anticipate the end of the current project. Different options can be considered: funding from foundations, partnerships with energy agencies, development of services.

## Our ambitions for the future



The overall positive results of 2017 and remaining challenges motivate us to do better in 2018. Indeed, the network remains fragile, and yet it is rapidly getting stronger thanks to the development of activities within the current project and the growth of our contact book. The revival of the network increases RURENER's presence at the European level and at the local level. In 2017, we seized as many opportunities as possible and we hope that they will pay in 2018. It is already the case at the European level as RURENER has been invited to take part in European projects and to contribute to conferences in different member states (Spain, France, Belgium). One of our goals for the coming years is to increase the recognition of rural territories and their actions for the energy transition in Brussels, with the organization of a European event that will also conclude the “2017, 2018, 2019, Years of Innovation for Rural Energy” project.

The identification of pilot territories for the energy transition in Europe is one of our missions, and we wish to offer field study tours on rural energy in 2018, 2019 and beyond to invite more territories to join the network and, more importantly, to join the effort towards a more sustainable and fair planet. This is part of the project we conduct and

will continue afterwards. The broadening of the network is necessary to enrich the sharing of experiences and give more legitimacy to our actions in Brussels. Moreover, the continuous mobilization of our members is a challenge that the development of tailored tools will help address. RURENER Energetik Talk (RURENER's newsletter), the new website and RURENER's presence social media (Facebook & Twitter) will continue to serve as an exchange for good practices across Europe. They will be improved continuously with the feedbacks of our members. In addition, we want to develop new "Member IDs" (this existed in the first years of RURENER) in order to present the main characteristics of each member which will help facilitate exchanges between members and identify other members with similar contexts and complementary strengths. We want these RURENER IDs to stimulate the life of the network.

The work ahead will require time and energy, which is why RURENER will be hiring interns starting in 2018 on specific topics such as the economic vulnerabilities and opportunities of energy and the promotion of rural innovations for the energy transition at the European level.

## Conclusion



After a busy year, 2017 will leave room for an even busier 2018. Now that the dynamic is boosted, we have to feed it with new experiences, new projects and new innovative ideas to make the energy transition an opportunity at reach of all rural territories of Europe. To do this, RURENER can count upon the great motivation of its team and of its members and partners. The network is lucky to gather rural stakeholders that face climate changes with resilience... and solidarity. They have tremendous energy, and it is this energy, from women and men committed to the transition, that keeps RURENER going. This is why we will conclude this report by saying thank you, for your commitment, your energy and your willingness to make a change, and we hope to see many more of you in 2018!

WWW.RURENER.EU



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[Rurener network](#)

