

Press release

Achieving EU climate and energy goals will not happen without multilevel governance

To implement the Green Deal and other key elements of the EU legislation, the EU and Member States must work hand in hand with local and regional partners, that was the basis for the LIFE-funded NECPlatform project, and overarching thematic of the high-level event hosted at the European Committee of the Regions (CoR).

For immediate release - The Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action mandates Member States to set up multilevel energy and climate dialogues, especially in the preparation of National Energy and Climate Plans – meaning that all levels of governance should have a role in the document preparation. But this is on paper: the sad truth is that many Member States struggle to put the regulation into practice and set up to inclusive multilevel dialogues. The NECPlatform LIFE-funded project gathered 11 speakers who stressed the importance of strengthening multilevel governance when revising the Governance Regulation, and to ensure support is provided for its implementation.

On March 18, over a hundred participants met in the Committee of the Regions in Brussels, gathered by the NECPlatform project to discuss multilevel governance and hear from good practices at various levels. **Urszula Zielinska, the Polish Ministry of Climate and Environment Secretary of State** opened the ceremony, highlighting that to be well-coordinated across all level of governance take patience and willingness, needed to address needs and uphold EU values and goals: everyone should feel include and every voice heard. *“Cooperation between the various levels is what allows to find solutions”*.

Joško Klisović, president of Zagreb City Assembly and member of the CoR, moderated the event and repeated that *“Multilevel governance is key to achieving our energy and climate goals. Local and regional authorities are on the frontlines of this transition. They make homes energy-efficient and help businesses go green. In Croatia, for example, cities and regions are leading reconstruction efforts after devastating earthquakes, yet they often lack direct access to the necessary funds and support. Our commitment is not just words—it’s real action on the ground. Strengthening multilevel governance means giving local leaders the resources they need to rebuild sustainably and drive lasting change.”* He insisted that there is a need for clarification on overlapping policies and a definite need for upscaling for a proper implementation of the Governance Regulation. What is needed is more money allocated to the policies (and a direct access to them), shorter procedures.

Finally, Mr Klisović concluded with the recommendation to set up SIC processes: simplified (reporting mechanisms), integrated (horizontally) and collaborative (vertically). NECPs and NECPRs would also be a good option to get more details on how governments assist LRAs in implementing, and how the dialogues have really fed the documents (here, the NECP). A call to use the CoR as a communication channel between LRAs and the EU authorities was issued and have a trilogue to make decisions. Another idea was the set up of one-stop-shops for LRAs to turn to for better implementation, as well as platforms to exchange good practices. In a way, what was started by the project NECPlatform.

Giulia Pizzini from IIECP and Thibaut Maraquin from Energy Cities, the project coordinators, explain how that story was written collaboratively, in 6 EU countries, setting up over 38 dialogues, gathering over 300 organisations and 1000 stakeholders. Member States faced the same challenges, lost in a maze, or how shown on screen, tangled as spaghetti... The project put article 11 into action. The project benchmarked other initiatives to understand what makes good dialogue platforms, set them up, and concluded by producing guidelines for replication, as well as a peer-to-peer programme to support other countries in their efforts. The keys to success? A structure independent from the political sphere, legitimacy, patience, flexibility, persistence and regularity, safety and trust, and relationships.

The project hope? That these platforms will last. They triggered good results and interesting discussions, such as regional COPs in France. The project was mentioned as an inspiration by **Paula Abreu Marques, Deputy Director at DG ENER of the European Commission**. She repeated that the idea of dialogues can be found in the programme of the new Commission, with every Commissioner required to organise at least 2 of them per year: *“for things to change on the ground, we need to involve people at the local level”*.

A panel of policymakers and researchers (**Alexandra Mares from the General Directorate for Energy Policies in the Romanian Ministry of Energy, Ana Zorić, Director at the Ministry of Finance in Croatia, Benedetta Brighenti, President of the AESS, DG of RENAEL, as well as Matthias Duwe, head of climate at the Ecologic Institute**) answered Mr Klisović's questions. Ms Mares mentioned that challenges include a fragmented policy framework and resistance to change. She recommended preparing national guides, tailored to specific contexts, on the obligations of the NECPs. Ms Zorić continued: *“Please, do not stop this project. The support received was crucial, especially for smaller countries with limited administrative capacity, sharing examples and working as teams helped a lot”*. A cooperation was established in Croatia with the financial sector, demonstrating that the cost of inaction would be much higher with the damages of climate events. Ms Brighenti referred to finding the *“right keys to work with the local level with the technical bridges for all voices that the dialogues represent”*. Mr Duwe concluded sharing insights from his latest research and reminding us the importance of sharing what matters in the dialogues.

The following day, about 50 people, mentors and mentees of the project replication programme – transferring best practices and knowledge acquired to 11 more countries, joined by researchers, NGOs, members of the European Commission and many more, met for a day of exchange, especially on how to reinforce article 11 of the Governance Regulation. A policy brief will be released shortly.



© Sam Glazier Photography

The project guidelines are available to all: <https://ieecp.org/publications/guidance-for-the-implementation-of-climate-and-energy-dialogue-platforms/>

More about the project: <https://energy-cities.eu/project/life-necplatform/>

PRESS CONTACT

Marine FABER PERRIO - Email: marine@ieecp.org - Phone: +33 6 10 04 75 64