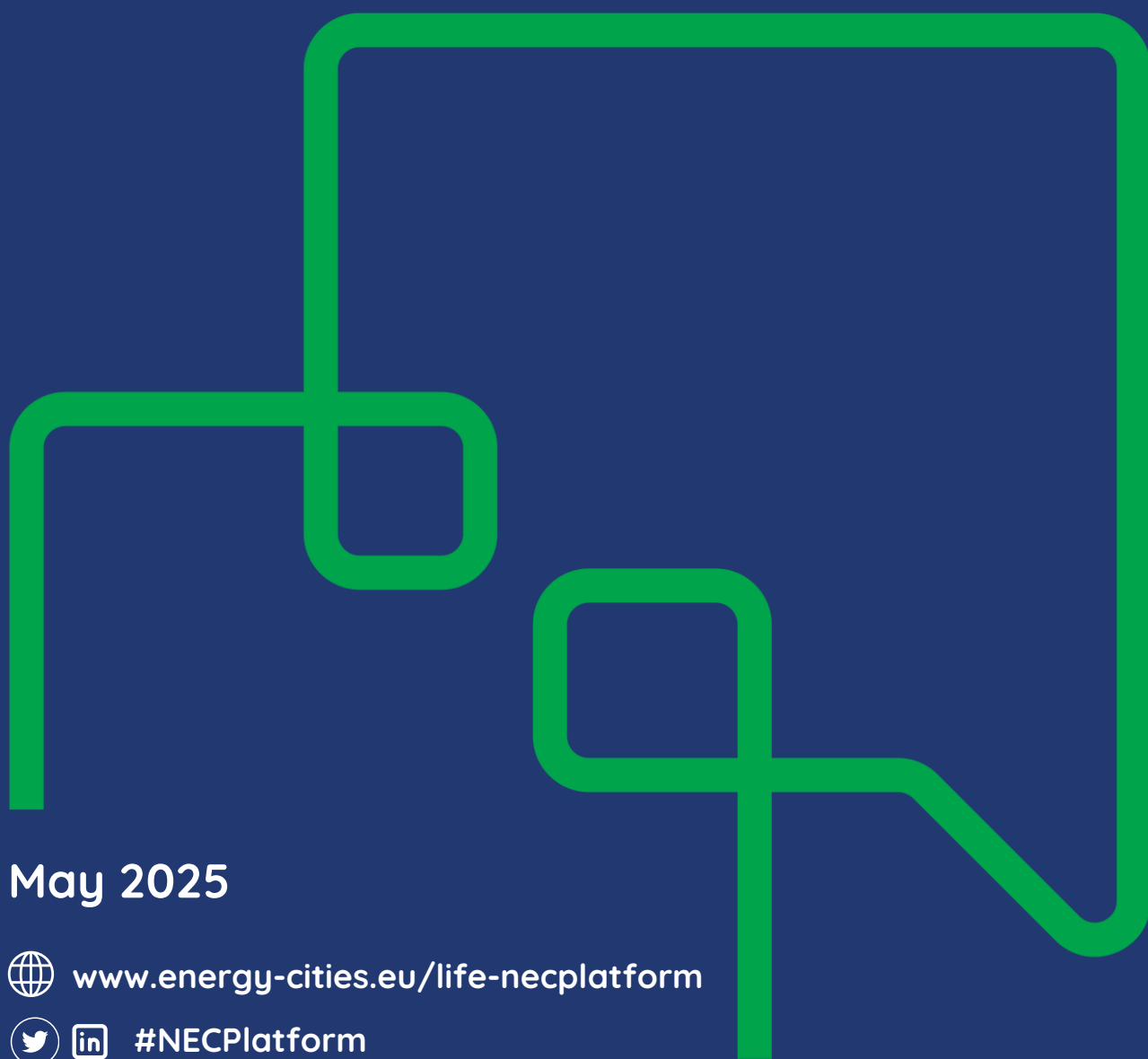


# Enhancing multilevel governance in the Governance Regulation

Empowering national governments to improve stakeholders' engagement, transparency and implementation of national energy and climate policies by providing clearer guidance



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## Executive summary

In view of a possible upcoming revision of the European Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action (2018/1999/EU), this policy brief presents key recommendations for enhancing multilevel governance and especially **Article 11 of the Governance Regulation**, ensuring **more effective, inclusive, structured, and transparent** stakeholders' engagement in national energy and climate governance.

The proposed improvements result from the lessons learned of the implementation of multilevel climate and energy dialogues in 6 EU countries and the outcomes of a workshop, organised in March 2025, by the LIFE-funded NECPlatform project - involving representatives from different organisations coming from 14 different EU Member States, including representatives of national ministries from 8 of them as well as the European Commission.

Specifically, **the NECPlatform project** consortium strongly recommends the European Commission and the co-legislators of the EU to put more emphasis on multi-level governance and support Member States in better implementing Article 11 by:



**Setting up a Concerted Action Governance Regulation** to share information, knowledge and practices in setting up and running multilevel Climate and Energy Dialogues (CED).



**Strengthening the reporting requirement** amending annex XXIII of the European Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/2299.



**Supporting Member States by adopting specific EU Guidance** on how to best implement Article 11, taking inspiration from the recommendations included in this document and in the NECPlatform Guidance on how to set up a CED.



**Enhancing the text of Article 11** in case of a revision of the Governance Regulation, focusing on the permanence of the dialogues and highlighting the CED scope beyond the NECP.



Including a **more detailed analysis** of compliance on Art. 11 in the assessment of the next NECPRs.



**Continue funding** third parties to support Member States in the implementation of the dialogues.


**The overall aim of the NECPlatform project** was to support six EU Member States (Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Italy, Portugal and Romania) in setting-up and managing permanent multi-level Climate and Energy Dialogue (CED) Platforms, helping them comply with Article 11 of the Governance Regulation by fostering vertical and horizontal integration of energy and climate policies. By the end of the project, the consortium successfully set up the 6 CEDs in the 6 MS, organising in total 38 national multi-level Climate and Energy Dialogue (CED) with more than 300 organisations involved in the different multi-level dialogues and more than 1000 individuals who attended at least one multi-level dialogue. The project was referenced in the HR (draft), PT and RO NECPRs and in the IT, RO, BG, PT NECPRs 2023. Moreover, it was quoted in the Commission notice on the guidance to MSs for the update of the 2021-2030 NECP and in the State of the Energy Union 2023. A replication programme involving representatives from 8 national Ministries, also took place, with materials documenting the process and replication guidelines available on the website.





## Background and challenges

Article 11 of the European Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action (2018/1999/EU) introduced a novel **framework to organise permanent dialogues between national governments, subnational authorities and other relevant stakeholders** on energy and climate matters, namely multi-level Climate and Energy Dialogues (CED).

However, several challenges hinder its effectiveness. Amongst the main ones are:

 **Lack of time and/or capacity:** Setting up these dialogues requires a major coordination effort on the part of the ministries, which may not have the capacity or the time (due to a lack of anticipation or short deadlines).

 **Lack of know-how:** The authorities responsible for the National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs) lack the know-how and expertise to set up these dialogues (composition of the dialogue, frequency, facilitation methods, content that could be discussed, etc.). The existing Article and guidance do not provide sufficient methodological guidelines.

 **Lack of prioritisation and long-term vision:** CEDs are not seen as a priority in the drafting phase of the NECPs (or of any other national energy and climate policy) and are often organised only at the end of the process, limiting the possibilities of contributing an ongoing dialogue to feed the plan in question. This is linked to a top-down planning culture in many Member States.



**Transparency concerns:** when addressing CEDs, both NECPs and National Energy and Climate Plans Reports (NECPRs) mainly focus on process rather than substantive outcomes of multilevel CEDs. It is therefore difficult to evaluate the added value of the dialogues.



**Need for flexibility:** Member States need to be able to adapt the MCED to what already exists in their country (existing dialogue structure, dialogues on other climate and energy legislation feeding their NECP...), but clearer guidelines are needed to ensure consistency.



**Overlap and misinterpretation:** Member States occasionally misinterpret or conflate the distinct scopes of Article 10 and Article 11 of the Governance Regulation. Article 10 focuses on organising public consultations to gather inputs and feedback of the public on the NECP whereas Article 11 requires the establishment of permanent multilevel and multi-stakeholders' dialogues to discuss and engage on national energy and climate policies.

Therefore, Article 10 and Article 11 have different:

	Article 10	Article 11
<b>Target audiences</b>	General public	Broader audience as it targets specifically local authorities, civil society organisations, business community, investors in addition of the general public
<b>Scopes</b>	NECPs	Broader scope (national energy and climate policies)
<b>Timeframes</b>	Consists of ad-hoc consultations	Aims to set up a permanent structure Dialogues should not be limited to the planning phase but should also accompany the implementation and evaluation of energy and climate policies over time.
<b>Engagement methods</b>	Consultation on a draft of the NECP	Dialogues which implies an exchange of views and ideas

## How could the European Commission support Member States in implementing Art. 11



In light of a potential revision of the European Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action (Regulation (EU) 2018/1999), the NECPlatform consortium has formulated six concrete recommendations for the European Commission to strengthen the implementation of Article 11.



These recommendations are based on the project findings over its 30-month duration and are further enriched by insights gathered during a discussion with representatives from 14 EU Member States, including officials from eight national ministries, and the European Commission.

## 1

### **Setting up a Concerted Action Governance Regulation to share information, knowledge and best practices in establishing and running multilevel Climate and Energy Dialogues.**

To enhance coordination and facilitate the exchange of best practices and information among EU Member States, the European Commission could consider **establishing a permanent platform or forum dedicated to the implementation of the Governance Regulation**. This platform would bring together government representatives and national experts responsible for the various articles and obligations under the Regulation – amongst which Articles 10 and 11–, enabling exchanges of best practices, common challenges, and shared solutions. Such a mechanism could be modelled on existing cooperation formats already successfully implemented for other pieces of energy legislation, such as the Concerted Actions for the Energy Efficiency Directive (CA EED)<sup>[1]</sup>, the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (CA EPBD)<sup>[2]</sup>, the Renewable Energy Directive (CA RES)<sup>[3]</sup>, and the Concerted Action on Market Surveillance (EEPLIANT4)<sup>[4]</sup>. These initiatives have proven effective in fostering mutual learning, streamlining implementation efforts, and supporting compliance across Member States. A similar structure for the Governance Regulation could strengthen coherence in national energy and climate plans (NECPs), long-term strategies, and integrated reporting, while also promoting transparency and consistency across the EU.

Moreover, a **subsection of the European Commission's webpage dedicated to the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action<sup>[5]</sup>** and/or **Concerted Action Governance Regulation initiative website** could be dedicated to the status of compliance of EU Member States with Article 11 (Climate and Energy Dialogues). Specifically, the section on Article 11 could include information on the national Climate and Energy Dialogue, indicating its lead or co-lead (being it the ministry or a third party), the recurrent members and (if possible) short reports of each meeting.

## 2

### **Strengthening the reporting requirement amending annex XXIII of the European Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/2299.**

To strengthen compliance by EU Member States with Article 11 of the Governance Regulation, it would be advisable to **review the European Commission's Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/2299<sup>[6]</sup>**, which defines the structure, format, technical specifications, and submission process for the integrated national energy and climate progress reports. Particular attention should be given to Annex XXIII of the Regulation, which – pursuant to Article 18 – sets out the reporting requirements for the multilevel Climate and Energy Dialogues as outlined in Article 11 of the Governance Regulation. Specifically, it would be advisable to **require more precise information from Member States in their reporting** compared to what is asked now (details on multilevel Climate and Energy Dialogues and progress in establishing the multilevel Climate and Energy Dialogue).

[1] <https://www.ca-eed.eu/>

[2] <https://www.ca-epbd.eu>

[3] <https://www.ca-res.eu/>

[4] <https://eepliant.eu/index.php>

[5] [https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/climate-strategies-targets/governance-energy-union-and-climate-action\\_en](https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/climate-strategies-targets/governance-energy-union-and-climate-action_en)

[6] <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022R2299>

A revised version of Annex XXIII, aimed at improving the clarity and effectiveness of these reporting obligations, is proposed below:

ANNEX XXIII  
REPORTING ON MULTILEVEL CLIMATE AND ENERGY DIALOGUE REFERRED TO IN ARTICLE 11  
OF REGULATION (EU) 2018/1999

**Table 1: Progress in establishing multilevel climate and energy dialogue referred to in Article 11 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 \***

Composition of the CED	M	
Number of meetings held (date and duration)	M	
Summary of points discussed in the meetings	M	
Inputs of the discussion considered in the NECP/ other national energy and climate policies	M	

Notes:

M = mandatory

\* Member States to provide details of multilevel climate and energy dialogue pursuant to national rules, in which local authorities, civil society organisations, business community, investors and other relevant stakeholders and the public engaging and discussing different scenarios envisaged for energy and climate policies, including for the long term.

### 3

#### Supporting Member States by adopting specific EU Guidance on how to best implement Article 11.

To address the issue - highlighted by the European Commission itself in the Staff Working Document accompanying the review of the Governance Regulation<sup>[7]</sup> - that “the Regulation’s provisions are not deemed precise or prescriptive enough” due to requirements being “too vague and insufficient guidance on which stakeholders to involve and how to operationalise dialogues (structure, allocation of responsibilities among participants, meeting frequency, etc.)”,

it is essential to provide clearer guidance to EU Member States on how to establish Climate and Energy Dialogues. However, this should be done without imposing a rigid format, allowing flexibility and accommodating different national approaches. Although the European Commission did provide some additional guidance to Member States in view of the submission of the final updated NECPs<sup>[8]</sup>, no clear indication was given on the aspects raised in the paragraph above.

[7] [https://energy.ec.europa.eu/document/download/59a845f8-b028-420e-8a0a-86990ccac458\\_en?filename=SWD%20accompanying%20the%20Report.pdf](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/document/download/59a845f8-b028-420e-8a0a-86990ccac458_en?filename=SWD%20accompanying%20the%20Report.pdf) p. 36

[8] [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.C\\_.2022.495.01.0024.01.ENG&toc=OJ%3AC%3A2022%3A495%3AFULL](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.C_.2022.495.01.0024.01.ENG&toc=OJ%3AC%3A2022%3A495%3AFULL)



The NECPlatform project would therefore suggest issuing a thorough guidance document targeted to national governments including:



## Minimum requirements that the dialogues should meet to be considered Climate and Energy Dialogues, such as:

- ✓ **Flexible but structured pool of participants** - establish a **predefined list of categories of organisations** (e.g. different ministries and state agencies, member(s) of the national parliament, national networks of local and regional authorities, academia, chamber of commerce or similar, companies on energy and climate-related sectors, private finance, youth organisations, NGOs, consumer organisations, worker unions, etc.) to guide Member States on the type of actors to involve, while leaving the flexibility to adapt to national context.
- ✓ **A suggested predefined list of elements** to be addressed, such as overarching topics and a (minimum) list of policies and measures.
- ✓ **An optimal frequency** of the meetings.



## A list of participatory methods to use.



A list of good practices and examples from other EU and non-EU multi-level governance initiatives which can be used as inspiration or starting point to set up or implement Climate and Energy Dialogues. Inspiration can be taken from the NECPlatform [list of best practices](#).



## Templates and tools which can be used by the lead of the Climate and Energy Dialogue, e.g. to:

- ✓ Map and identify the relevant stakeholders to invite (if a CED is not already in place).
- ✓ Launch an open call to gather the interest (if a CED is not already in place).
- ✓ Convene the meetings (e.g. invitation emails).
- ✓ Summarise the main discussion points and outcomes of each CED meeting.
- ✓ Formalise the participation in the dialogues (e.g. collaboration agreements or memoranda of understanding).
- ✓ Develop an online repository.

The NECPlatform project published the [Guidance for the implementation of Climate and Energy Dialogue platforms](#), which can be used as a good starting point to provide Member States with the above-mentioned information.



4

**Enhancing the text of Article 11, to make it more operational, precise and less confusing.**

To make Article 11 less vague and more operational, the NECPlatform consortium proposes the following updated version:

### Multilevel climate and energy dialogue

Each Member State shall establish a **permanent** multilevel climate and energy dialogue ~~pursuant to national rules~~, in which local authorities, civil society organisations, business community, investors and other relevant stakeholders ~~and the general public~~ are able actively to engage and discuss ~~the different scenarios envisaged for national~~ energy and climate policies. **Such dialogues shall be used for planning purposes including the definition of objectives, targets, scenarios and timelines – also including** for the long term; implementation purposes, including defining budget, financing options and roles and responsibilities of the different actors; monitoring and verification purposes and review progress, unless it already has a structure which serves the same purpose. Integrated national energy and climate plans, **long term strategies, national adaptation plans and other national plans** may be discussed within the framework of such a dialogue.

### Rational for changes:

- ✓ Focus on permanence and institutionalisation.
- ✓ Remove the general public from the text, as Article 10 is dedicated to public consultation and including the general public in Article 11 might lead to confusion.
- ✓ Extend content and purpose of the dialogues, focusing not only on planning but also on implementation and monitoring and verification.
- ✓ Make clearer that the scope of the dialogues goes beyond NECPs and should cover all major national energy and climate policies.

5

**Including a more detailed analysis of compliance on Article 11 in the assessment of the next NECPRs.**

In its latest assessment of progress towards the objectives of the Energy Union and Climate Action<sup>[9]</sup>, the European Commission dedicated a whole section (5) to multilevel Climate and Energy Dialogues. The tone used in the assessment is not entirely negative, however it is clear that the level of implementation of the Climate and Energy Dialogues is uneven in the 27 EU Member States – with the majority of them falling short of the ambition of the Article, and that there is a need for a more inclusive and structured stakeholder engagement and better reporting on how dialogues are structured and used.

[9] <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=SWD%3A2023%3A646%3AFIN&qid=1698236844015>



To achieve what even the European Commission appears to be encouraging in the assessment – which refers to actual engagement of stakeholders that goes beyond symbolic consultation, a demonstration of the impact of the dialogues and an expansion of scopes beyond the NECPs – the NECPlatform project encourages the European Commission to be blunter in the assessment and to give a more detailed and precise feedback to Member States, possibly referring also to the Guidelines developed under the NECPlatform project and to the best practices collected.



## Continue funding to support Member States capacities to implement the dialogues.

Last but not least, in order to make sure that Member States start to - or continue to - invest in improving their multilevel Climate and Energy Dialogue platforms, it would be important to support their capacities, for example, by:



**Continuing funding actions** such as the NECPlatform project. The project experience and feedback from national ministries have proven that that the support of a third party in organising dialogues can be invaluable for Member States with limited administrative capacity. Furthermore, the position of third parties, when they are recognised by the other players and active in climate and energy issues, makes it possible to facilitate dialogue and the participation of certain players by limiting frontal political opposition to a government and ensuring continuity in the event of government instability. However, the ministries must always remain very active and co-organise these dialogues along with the third party.



Providing **technical support** e.g. via Technical Support Instrument (TSI)<sup>[10]</sup>.

[10] [https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/technical-support-instrument/technical-support-instrument-tsi\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/technical-support-instrument/technical-support-instrument-tsi_en)



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