

Many levels, one voice

Co-creating climate and energy policy in the EU

May 2025



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Introduction

Why NECPlatform

The **NECPlatform** project was launched in response to the persistent gaps in the implementation of **Article 11 of the Governance Regulation**, which requires Member States to establish permanent multilevel Climate and Energy Dialogues (CEDs). While the Regulation sets out the obligation, it has remained vague in terms of operational guidance, leaving many Member States without the tools, structures, or capacity to implement meaningful and inclusive dialogue processes.

Multilevel governance (MLG) is essential to ensure that climate and energy policies are not only well-informed but also effectively implemented on the ground.



Twining event organised with the CapaCities project, 2024. © NECPlatform

Local and regional authorities are often at the frontline of delivering energy transition measures – from building renovation and sustainable mobility to community engagement and renewable energy deployment – yet they are too often left out of national planning processes. By failing to include the lowest administrative levels, national governments risk overlooking context-specific challenges and slowing down the implementation of key policies.

The NECPlatform project aimed to fill this gap by supporting six Member States (Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Italy, Portugal and Romania) in creating or reinforcing permanent dialogue platforms, enabling **vertical and horizontal integration**, trust-building, and long-term cooperation between all levels of governance and a broad spectrum of stakeholders.

These platforms, called CEDs (according to the text of the Governance Regulation) were defined by the NECPlatform project consortium as follows:

***Multilevel Climate and Energy Dialogues (CED)** are platforms bringing together representatives from national and sub-national authorities and other relevant stakeholders, such as representatives from civil society, academia, industry, financial sector, NGOs, etc. Their purpose is to **manage, in a collaborative process, the design, implementation and monitoring of climate and energy policies** to make them coherent across levels of governance (e.g. European, national and local) and areas of competence. These platforms are also meant to ensure national policies are consistent with participants' capacities and needs to engage in an ambitious and fair ecological transition with common objectives.*



In order to reach the project's objective, a team of six national partners (one per MS) who could work at national level – establishing links between the different levels of governance and other relevant stakeholders, and managing all necessary logistics – supported by the project coordinator Energy Cities (also national partner for France) and the Institute for European Energy and Climate Policy who provided content expertise and scientific knowledge.

The Governance Regulation

The European Regulation 1999/2018 on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action (hereafter [Governance Regulation](#)) sets out a framework for EU Member States (MS) to plan, report, and monitor their climate and energy actions toward the goal of climate neutrality by 2050.

- ➔ **NECPs (National Energy and Climate Plans):** These 10-year plans address five energy union dimensions (decarbonisation, energy efficiency, energy security, internal market, R&I). MS submitted their first NECPs for 2021–2030 by 2019, and updates are required every 10 years, with mid-term reviews due every five years (e.g. 2023 and 2033).
- ➔ **LTS (Long-Term Strategies):** Required under Chapter 3, these 30-year strategies outline how MS will meet Paris Agreement goals. They must align with NECPs and include detailed emission reduction paths, sectoral actions, socio-economic impacts, and links to broader national strategies.
- ➔ **NECPRs (NECP Progress Reports):** Every two years, MS must submit reports on NECP implementation. Reporting is done via **Reportnet3** (GHG and adaptation) and **ReportENER** (energy topics, fossil fuel subsidy phase-out, and Article 11 implementation), following templates in Implementing Regulation 2022/2299.

Multilevel Governance and Public Consultation

Article 11 of the Governance Regulation requires MS to establish a *“permanent multi-level climate and energy dialogue, bringing together local authorities, civil society organisations, the business community, investors and other relevant stakeholders to discuss the different options envisaged for energy and climate policies”*. Moreover, Article 10 of the same Regulation provides that MS must ensure that the public is given early and effective opportunities to participate in the preparation of the draft NECPs as well as of the LTS, reinforcing even more the obligations MS already have as signatories to the [Aarhus Convention](#), which regulates access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters.

Why Multilevel governance will become more and more central in EU policy

EU legislation, particularly under the European Green Deal, increasingly acknowledges the vital role of local and regional authorities in achieving the EU's climate neutrality target. Recent revisions of key directives under the "Fit for 55" package, have created new planning and implementation obligations at the sub-national level, reflecting their proximity to citizens and deep territorial knowledge, such as:



The revised [Energy Efficiency Directive \(EED\)](#) requires local governments to reduce energy consumption by 1.9% annually (Art. 5) and renovate 3% of public building floor area over 250 m² per year (Art. 6). Municipalities with over 45,000 inhabitants must also develop local heating and cooling plans (Art. 25).



The recast [Energy Performance of Buildings Directive \(EPBD\)](#) requires national governments to involve local and regional authorities in drafting national renovation plans (Art. 3). Public buildings must be zero-emission from 2028 (Art. 7), equipped with solar panels (Art. 9), and prepared for electric vehicle charging and bike parking (Art. 14). Additionally, regions must establish at least one one-stop-shop for renovation support, or one per 80,000 residents (Art. 15).



The [Renewable Energy Directive \(RED\)](#) similarly mandates that local authorities integrate renewables into spatial planning (Art. 15), enable access to public rooftops for renewable energy production (Art. 15a), and cooperate in defining 'renewables acceleration areas' (Art. 15b). Authorities are also encouraged to support self-consumption and participate in energy communities.

Importantly, these directives do not merely impose obligations – they also require **national governments to provide administrative and financial support** to local and regional authorities. In cases where national or local plans must be drafted (e.g. heating and cooling or renovation plans), meaningful consultation and co-creation processes are also mandated. Beyond energy-specific legislation, the EU is strengthening requirements for stakeholder engagement in broader climate policy. A case in point is the [Social Climate Fund Regulation \(2023/955\)](#), which requires Member States to develop Social Climate Plans by June 2025 through public consultations involving sub-national authorities, civil society, youth organisations, and other stakeholders.

Together, these developments demonstrate that **effective coordination across administrative levels is no longer optional but essential**.

Achieving national and European goals requires the active participation and sustained engagement of **regional and local actors throughout the entire policy cycle**, ensuring that responsibility for implementing the co-created plans – including burden sharing, financial resources, and local-level challenges – is equitably distributed among all stakeholders. This is where **multilevel governance** becomes indispensable. CEDs can serve as structured platforms for vertical and horizontal cooperation, enabling coordination, avoiding policy overlaps, and ensuring that the broader legal and policy framework supports, rather than hinders, climate action at all levels.

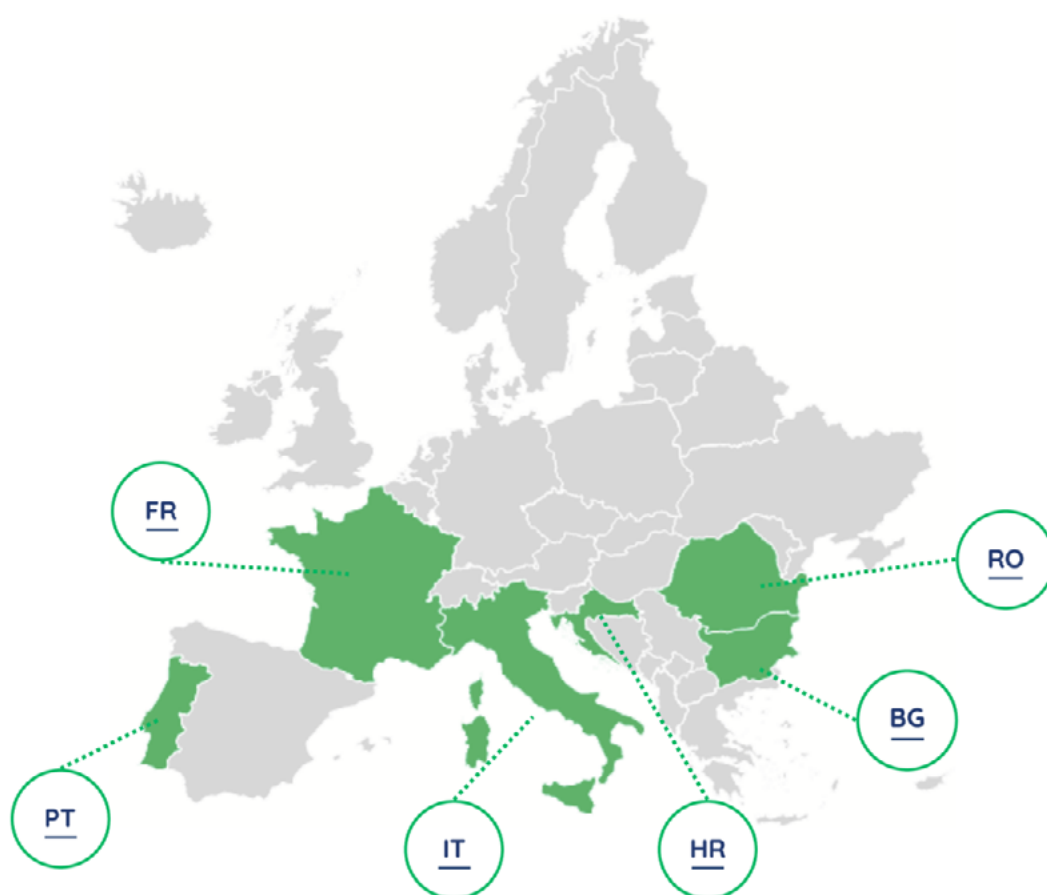
Identification of best practices

The first task of the NECPlatform project set the foundation for all future activities: to gain a clear understanding of the **administrative and governance structures** in the participating countries. This initial step was crucial for identifying **existing good practices in multilevel governance (MLG)** and for learning how to design effective, inclusive, and lasting **Climate and Energy Dialogues (CEDs)**.

A core component of this work was the **comparative analysis of the six participating countries' administrative systems**. This provided valuable context for understanding how climate and energy decisions are distributed across national, regional, and local levels, and how different institutional settings shape the potential for multilevel cooperation. The analysis revealed significant diversity in governance models—from centralised to highly decentralised systems—highlighting the need for **tailored approaches** to dialogue that respect each country's specific institutional logic and decision-making culture.

Building on this, the project team mapped and reviewed **21 multilevel governance initiatives**, selecting 17 for in-depth analysis through stakeholder interviews. This helped uncover not only the structural features of these initiatives, but also the operational realities of how dialogue and coordination are managed in practice.

To support knowledge sharing and inspire replication, these initiatives have also been featured in an **interactive map of good practices**, available on the NECPlatform section of the Energy Cities website. This tool provides accessible, structured information on each initiative, allowing users to explore different models of multilevel governance and understand how various actors collaborate across levels. The map is intended as a living resource for policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders engaged in designing or improving climate and energy dialogues.



Key insights from the analysis include:



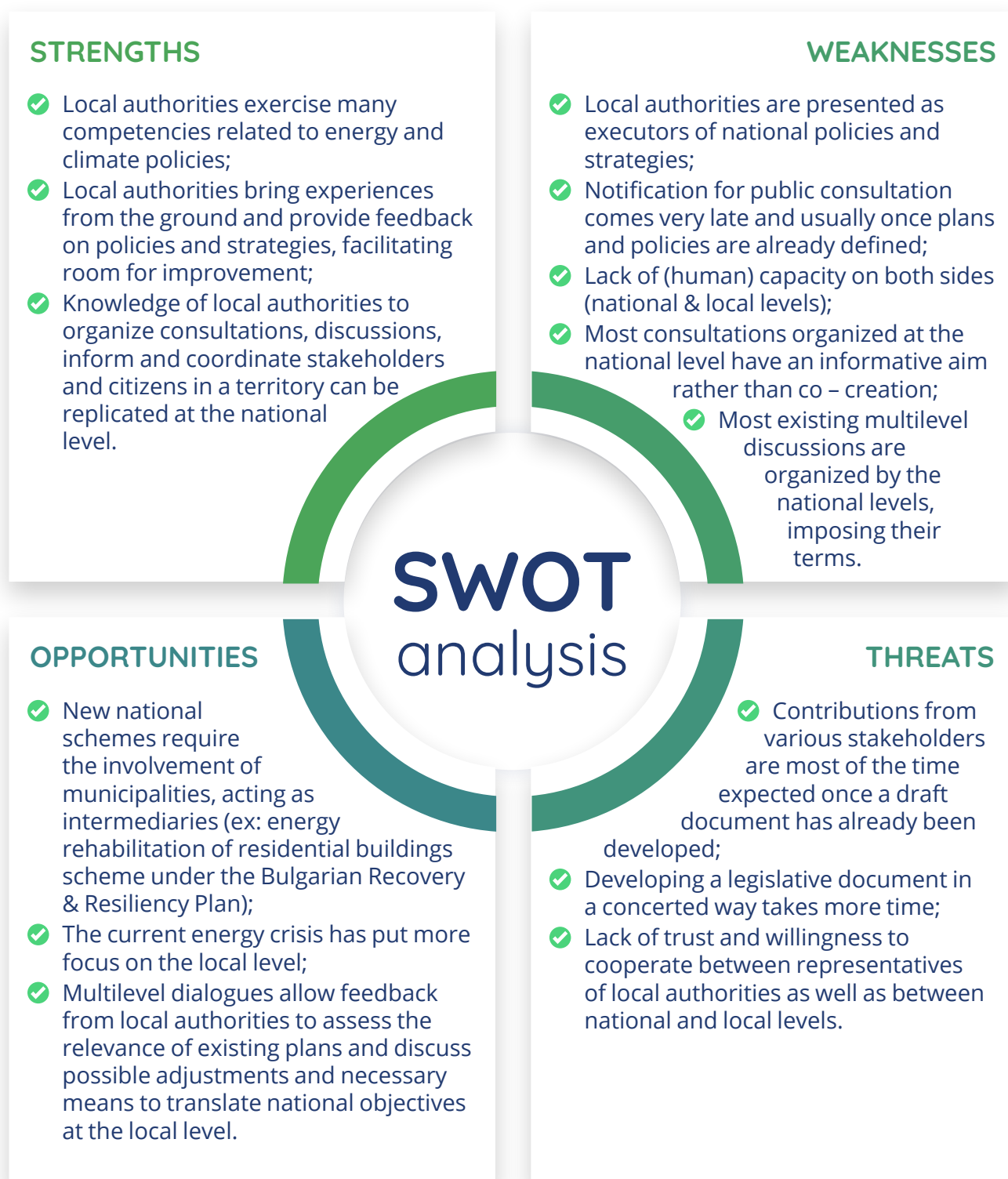
This work not only highlighted promising practices already in place (some of which have been invited to participate in the project's peer learning sessions or events) but also pointed to the conditions under which CEDs can thrive. These findings continue to inform the NECPlatform's development of national dialogue models and offer valuable guidance for other Member States aiming to foster more effective and inclusive energy and climate governance.

The full report can be consulted [here](#).

SWOT analysis

Analysis of obstacles, challenges and drivers

Using a SWOT methodology, the partners analysed for each of the 6 countries the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to local governments' involvement in drafting NECPs. While national contexts vary – shaped by political traditions, institutional structures, and administrative capacities – common trends emerge. See the summary SWOT analysis below.



The partners examined specific barriers that limit local authorities' action and recognition as credible partners in climate and energy governance in their country. These barriers fall into three main categories:



Human resource constraints – Portugal and Croatia highlight a lack of staff, while Bulgaria points to insufficient planning expertise.



Access to data – Italy and Romania report major challenges in obtaining accurate and timely data for planning and monitoring.



Financing difficulties – France and Croatia note that fragmented and complex funding mechanisms hinder implementation.

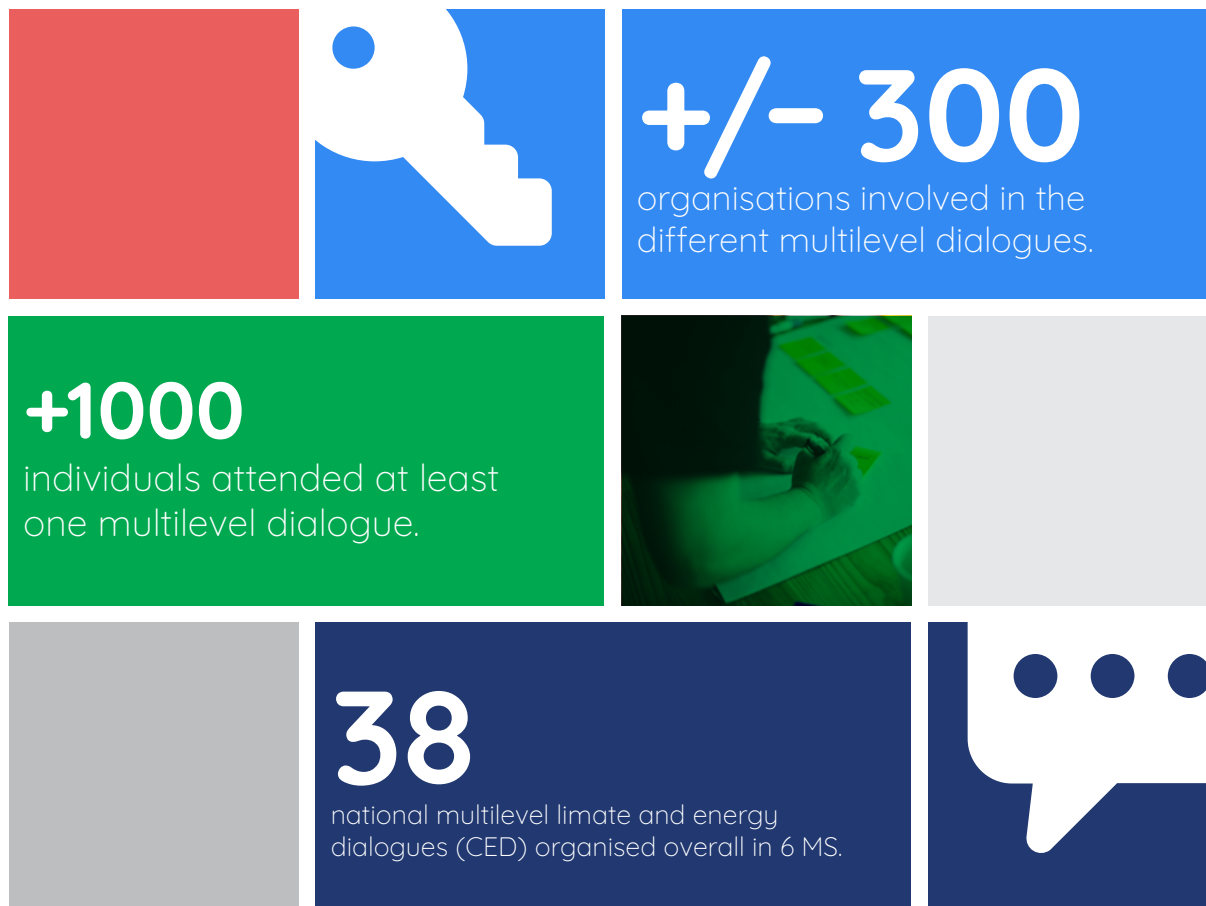
Project partners brought these barriers into the multilevel dialogues they organised to help identify solutions. Addressing them is crucial to ensure that local and regional governments have the skills and resources needed to drive the ecological transition in their territories and contribute meaningfully to national policy discussions.

Access the full report [here](#).



The first HR dialogue, NECPlatform in Croatia, ©NECPlatform

Key results of the NECPlatform project



Dialogue #	Bulgaria	France	Croatia	Italy	Portugal	Romania
#1	02/06/23	31/05/23	21/03/23	03/04/23	17/04/23	20/04/23
#2	10-11/07/23	16/11/23	18/05/23	18/05/23	30/01/24	21/02/24
#3	27/11/23	02/02/24	13/07/23	17/10/23	29/05/24	28/02/24
#4	30/01/24	20/09/24	28/02/24	22/03/24	30/01/25	06/03/24
#5	24/04/24	29/11/24	23/04/24	11/04/24		10/04/24
#6	03/07/24	06/03/25	14/11/24	10/12/24		01/10/24
#7	30/07/24		31/03/25	27/02/25		11/03/25



NECPlatform referenced in the [HR](#), [PT](#) and [RO](#) final updated NECPs.



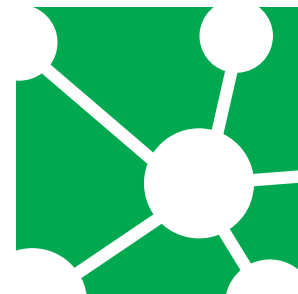
NECPlatform referenced in the IT, RO, BG, PT 2023 NECPRs.



NECPlatform quoted in the [European Commission notice on the guidance to Member States for the update of the 2021-2030 NECP](#) and in the State of the Energy Union 2023 ([technical assessment of NECPs](#)).

NECPlatform referenced in the PT 2025 NECPR (only one available so far).

Organisation of a successful **EUSEW policy event** together with **DG ENERGY** of the European Commission.



Organisation of a peer learning programme to transfer knowledge to other Member States with the participation of 10 organisations from other countries, including 8 national ministries in charge of drafting the NECPs.



Drafting of guidelines on how to set up Climate and Energy Dialogues

Drawing on over two years of practical experience across six EU countries, the team developed the **NECPlatform Guidelines** where the key lessons learned are distilled into a clear, actionable framework for setting up and running **Climate and Energy Dialogue (CED) platforms**. These guidelines represent the capitalisation of the project's efforts to establish structured, inclusive, and permanent multilevel governance processes, in line with Article 11 of the EU Governance Regulation. They offer a step-by-step roadmap, enriched by real-world examples and ready-to-use tools, to help national and subnational actors collaborate more effectively on climate and energy policies.

Summary of the NECPlatform four-step approach to establishing CED platforms:



Milestone 1: Preliminary information gathering and alliance building

- ✓ **Actions:** Identify existing consultation processes, map relevant stakeholders, and initiate contact with key actors.
- ➔ **Objective:** Lay the groundwork for a collaborative platform by understanding the current landscape and building initial alliances.



Milestone 2: Structuring the CED and organizing workshops

- ✓ **Actions:** Define the platform's mission, objectives, and structure; plan workshops and meetings.
- ➔ **Objective:** Establish a clear framework and schedule for the dialogue process, ensuring stakeholder engagement and clarity of purpose.



Milestone 3: Implementing the dialogue

- ✓ **Actions:** Conduct meetings, facilitate discussions, and document outcomes.
- ➔ **Objective:** Enable active participation from all stakeholders, fostering transparent and productive dialogues.



Milestone 4: Evaluation and integration into NECP reporting

- ✓ **Actions:** Assess the effectiveness of the dialogue, gather feedback, and integrate findings into National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs).
- ➔ **Objective:** Ensure the dialogue's outcomes are reflected in policy planning and reporting, enhancing accountability and continuous improvement.

Photo above © Diggity Marketing, Unsplash; © Getty Images; © NECPlatform; © Getty Images.

For each of the steps, the report includes some **best practices** showcasing real-life examples of how multilevel Climate and Energy Dialogues were operationalised across the six different national contexts.

Two examples:

1

Mapping existing consultations:

In France, Energy Cities conducted a comprehensive mapping of ongoing consultations between state and local authorities.

This exercise revealed gaps in stakeholder engagement and informed the development of a more inclusive dialogue platform.

Decentralising CED meetings across different regions:

In Portugal, the decision to decentralise meetings as much as possible helped ensure greater **territorial balance and inclusiveness**. By holding dialogues closer to local stakeholders, the process fostered stronger engagement from municipalities, civil society, and regional actors, and ensured that **diverse geographic perspectives** were reflected in national policy discussions.

2



Additional resources: the guidance developed by NECPlatform partners includes practical tools such as templates for invitations, participation agreements, and reporting formats.

These resources support the effective implementation and institutionalization of CED platforms, promoting sustained multilevel collaboration in energy and climate governance.

For more information you can find the full document [here](#).



Policy recommendations

Over the course of the NECPlatform project, four policy briefs were produced to better support implementation of **Article 11 of the Governance Regulation (EU 2018/1999)**, which requires Member States to establish permanent **multilevel Climate and Energy Dialogues (CEDs)**. Drawing on lessons from six participating countries, stakeholder engagement, and a broader replication programme involving 14 EU Member States, the briefs offer a coherent set of recommendations to improve the design, institutionalisation, and impact of multilevel governance in EU climate and energy policy.



Policy Brief 1 – Published June 2023

The importance of Climate and Energy Dialogues in national governance

The first NECPlatform policy brief introduces the concept and value of **multilevel Climate and Energy Dialogues (CEDs)** as required under Article 11 of the Governance Regulation.

It highlights the need for structured, continuous engagement between national governments and subnational stakeholders to ensure more democratic, informed, and locally grounded climate and energy policymaking. Drawing on early project findings, it stresses that while Member States are legally obliged to establish such dialogues, implementation remains uneven.

The brief calls for stronger political commitment, better integration of dialogues into NECP development, and a shift from symbolic consultation to meaningful co-creation of policies.



National experiences and lessons learned

The second policy brief presents lessons learned from the six NECPlatform pilot countries as they worked to establish or strengthen their national CED platforms. It details practical challenges encountered—such as low stakeholder engagement, lack of institutional clarity, and limited resources—and outlines enabling factors that helped overcome them.

These include involving credible facilitators, ensuring ministerial co-ownership, and adapting dialogue formats to national administrative cultures. The brief emphasises the importance of both vertical (across governance levels) and horizontal (across sectors) cooperation, while calling for tailored approaches rather than one-size-fits-all solutions.

Policy Brief 2 – Published September 2024

Replication and broader EU impact

The third policy brief addresses in particular Member States that were not included in the project consortium and explores how NECPlatform insights can support CED implementation across all EU Member States.

It invites ministries and relevant institutional or civil society organisations from EU countries to take part in the replication programme of the project.

Policy Brief 3 –
Published
November
2024



Strengthening article 11 through EU action

The final policy brief focuses on the **future of Article 11** in the context of a possible revision of the Governance Regulation. It puts forward six strategic recommendations to the European Commission and co-legislators, including the creation of a Concerted Action platform for Article 11, clearer and more binding reporting obligations, and official EU guidance for national implementation.

The brief also proposes a revised, more operational version of Article 11, clarifying its scope, target audiences, and permanence. These recommendations are grounded in NECPlatform's practical experience and respond directly to the gaps and barriers observed across Member States.

Policy Brief 4 –
Published May
2025



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[Click to access each brief](#)

Summary of the main recommendations

Background challenges

The project identified persisting challenges hindering the full implementation of Article 11 – including the limited institutional capacity, lack of technical know-how, insufficient prioritisation during NECP development, and confusion between Article 10 (public consultation) and Article 11 (structured multi-stakeholder dialogue). The lack of transparency in how dialogues influence policy outcomes is also highlighted, as is the need for guidance that balances **flexibility with structure**.


To address these challenges, the brief puts forward **six main recommendations** for EU policymakers:

1



Establish a “Concerted Action Governance Regulation” – a structured EU platform for Member States to share experiences, tools, and best practices on Article 11 implementation, modelled after similar platforms under other EU energy directives.

2



Amend Annex XXIII of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/2299 – to improve the quality and comparability of reporting on CEDs, including details on participation, frequency, topics discussed, and their influence on policy.

3



Develop EU-level guidance on Article 11 – offering minimum quality standards, templates, stakeholder categories, and dialogue formats, while allowing flexibility for national adaptation.

Building legitimacy

Improving policy outcomes

Fostering long-term cooperation

Revise the text of Article 11 – to clarify its scope (beyond NECPs), objectives (including implementation and monitoring), and audience (excluding general public to avoid confusion with Article 10).



Ensure more robust assessment of compliance – by strengthening how the European Commission evaluates Member States' implementation of Article 11 in future NECP Reports.



Continue targeted EU funding and technical assistance – to support Member States, particularly those with limited capacity, in setting up and maintaining permanent multilevel dialogue structures, potentially involving trusted third-party facilitators.



In order to **institutionalise multilevel dialogue** as a core element of EU climate and energy governance, Article 11 of the Governance Regulation should not be positioned as a procedural requirement, but as a critical tool for building legitimacy, improving policy outcomes, and fostering long-term cooperation across governance levels.

BULGARIA



About EnEffect



EnEffect is **Bulgaria's leading expert organization** in sustainable energy and climate policy at the local level. With long-standing experience in supporting municipalities to develop and implement municipal energy plans, EnEffect plays a key role in advancing local climate action.

As coordinator of the **Bulgarian Network of Energy Cities** and national **Covenant of Mayors** support structure, EnEffect has built strong partnerships with local authorities, helping align their efforts with EU climate and energy goals. Its deep technical knowledge, combined with a proven ability to **engage stakeholders** and build **institutional dialogue**, makes it uniquely positioned to act as a bridge between local and national levels.

In NECPlatform, EnEffect led the **Bulgarian national hub**, mobilising local governments, national institutions, and civil society to contribute to the development and revision of Bulgaria's **National Energy and Climate Plan**. By bringing **bottom-up perspectives** into national planning, EnEffect ensured that local needs and capacities are reflected in strategic decisions.

With a strong track record in **capacity building, advocacy** and coordination, EnEffect was the natural choice to lead NECPlatform in Bulgaria, reinforcing its role as a **key actor** in the country's just and inclusive energy transition.



"Participating in NECPlatform allowed us to break long-standing barriers in national climate policy-making by establishing Bulgaria's first truly inclusive, multilevel dialogue process. Despite political instability, we succeeded in bringing diverse voices to the table and ensured they were heard in the updated NECP."

Dragomir Tzanev (Executive Director of Center for Energy Efficiency EnEffect)

Main achievements

EnEffect successfully led the **NECPlatform initiative** in Bulgaria, creating the country's first **structured and inclusive process** for multilevel dialogue on climate and energy policy. Operating in a **challenging political environment** marked by instability—seven caretaker governments and two short-lived regular governments since 2021—EnEffect ensured that **meaningful engagement** still took place during the development of the updated **National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP)**.

At the start of the project, Bulgaria had no tradition of **stakeholder engagement** in strategic planning. The original NECP was developed without dialogue, and **public consultations** took place only after the draft was submitted to the European Commission. Against this background, EnEffect took a **proactive approach** to build a **national platform for dialogue**, engaging local governments, NGOs, energy agencies, academia, business, and media.

Over two and a half years, EnEffect organized **seven multilevel consultation dialogues**, involving 712 participants from over 250 organizations, including key institutional actors: six international authorities, nine national institutions, 48 municipal and regional authorities, and numerous **high-level politicians**—MEPs, national MPs, ministers, governors, and mayors. The dialogues addressed vital issues such as municipal potential, financing, energy transition, and **NECP governance**.

The third and fourth dialogues were co-organized with the **Ministry of Environment and Water (MoEW)**. These high-level events attracted over 120 participants each and featured parallel working group discussions on the NECP's five dimensions, with formal recommendations submitted to the MoEW. The final event, held as a side event to the **IPCC session in Sofia**, again drew high-level attention and broadened stakeholder engagement.

EnEffect's efforts led to **tangible outcomes**:

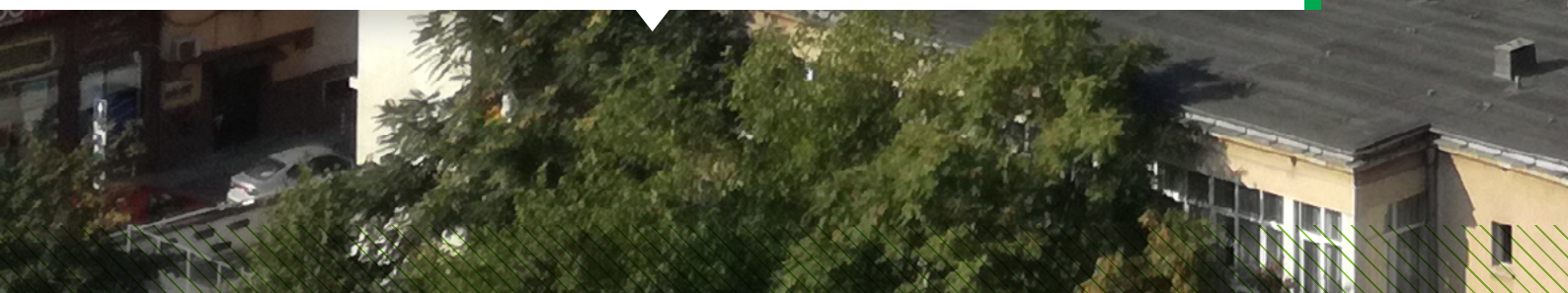
- ✓ The Bulgarian NECP revision process included **two public consultations**, a significant step forward from the previous cycle.
- ✓ NECPlatform project was **mentioned in the Bulgarian NECPR**.
- ✓ A wider community of stakeholders is now actively engaged in climate and energy discussions.
- ✓ Two municipal declarations and **more than 50 pages of recommendations** were produced; some of these were **reflected in the updated NECP**, which shows increased ambition.
- ✓ A **lasting dialogue platform** was established, fostering better coordination between levels of government and civil society.

Despite political turnover, EnEffect maintained **strong working relationships** with municipalities and civil society, while navigating the complexities of changing ministerial staff. This adaptability, combined with its long-standing role as coordinator of the Bulgarian Municipal Energy Efficiency Network EcoEnergy, made EnEffect the ideal national lead for NECPlatform. In summary, by establishing the NECPlatform in Bulgaria EnEffect has initiated a **transformation in stakeholder engagement** in national climate and energy planning. The project not only improved **transparency and participation** in the NECP process but also laid the groundwork for more **inclusive and coordinated multilevel governance** in the future.



“Multilevel governance is essential for delivering effective and just climate and energy policies—it ensures that national strategies reflect the realities, needs, and capacities of local actors. Through NECPlatform, we demonstrated that when municipalities, civil society, and national institutions are brought together in structured dialogue, the quality and legitimacy of planning improves. Our key achievement was building a functional national platform where this exchange could happen for the first time in Bulgaria, leading to broader stakeholder engagement and increased recognition of local contributions in the revised NECP.”

Dragomir Tzanev (Executive Director of Center for Energy Efficiency EnEffect)



National dialogues

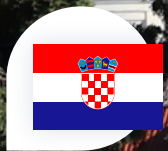
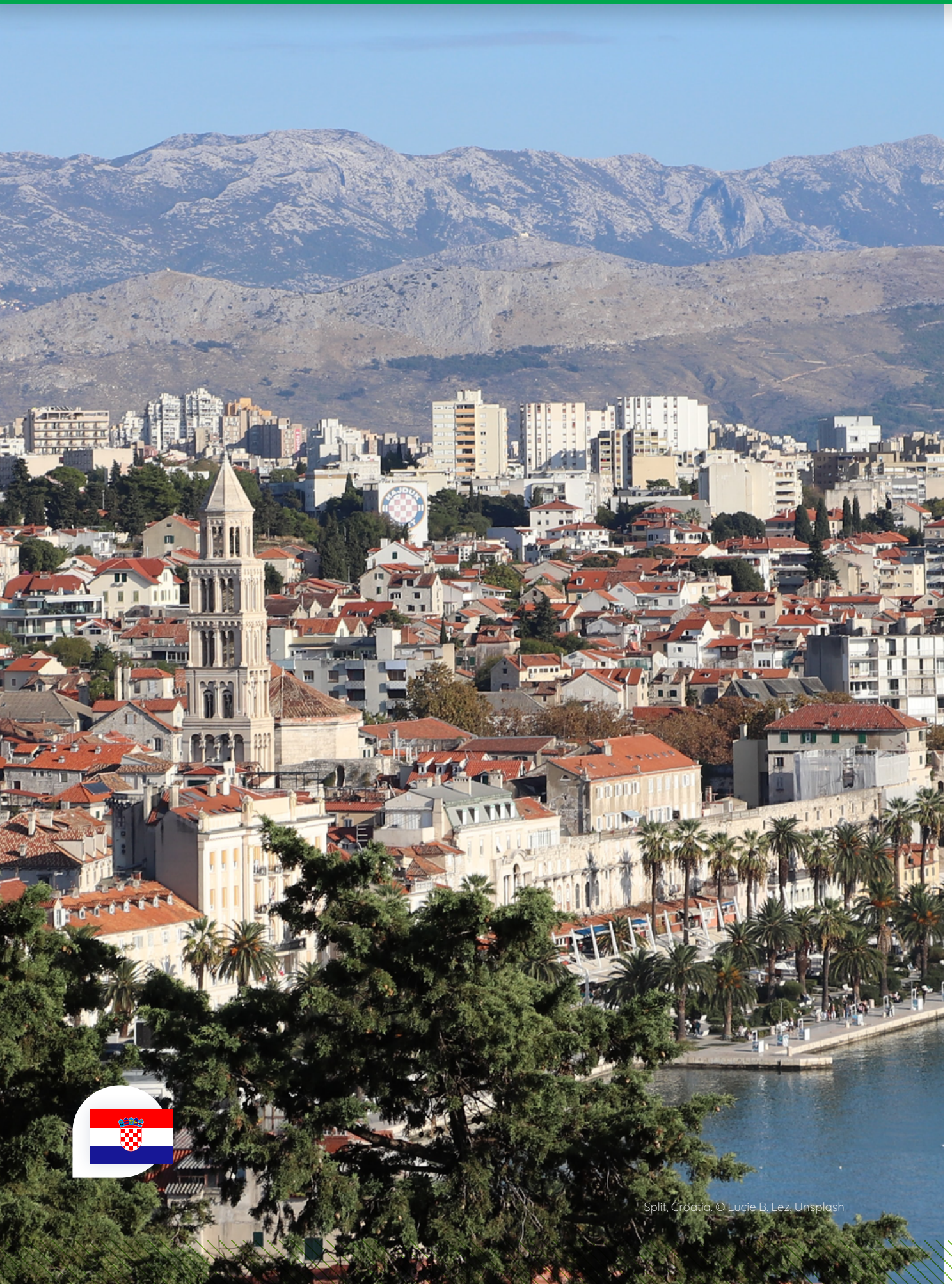
CED # Date Place	Main stakeholders	Highlights from the discussion
#1 02/06/2023 Burgas	Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (MRDPW); Sustainable Energy Development Agency (SEDA); 14 municipalities; 2 regional authorities; etc.	Municipalities lack support from national authorities in implementing climate policies and engaging citizens.
#2 10-11/07/2023 Gabrovo	MRDPW; SEDA; 16 municipalities; 1 regional authority; etc.	Discussion on fiscal decentralization and partnerships. Call for stronger cooperation between national and local authorities.
#3 27/11/2023 Sofia	Ministry of Energy (MoE), Ministry of Environment and Water (MOEW); MRDPW; SEDA; 9 municipalities; 1 regional authority; etc.	Stakeholder participation is crucial for objective prioritization of measures and financial planning. Energy efficiency must be central in the revised NECP. Market liberalization is seen as essential to scaling energy efficiency and renewable energy adoption.
#4 30/01/2024 Sofia	National Parliament; MoE, MOEW, MRDPW, SEDA; 16 municipalities; 4 regional authorities; etc.	Building renovation and decarbonization identified as key priorities. Financial institutions stress need for policy consistency and investment in skills development for the construction sector.
#5 24/04/2024 Sofia	MoE, MOEW, SEDA; 3 municipalities; etc.	Decarbonization scenarios presented, showing current policies insufficient to achieve full GHG neutrality by 2050. Need for increased investment in low-carbon infrastructure, energy efficiency, and household electrification.
#6 03/07/2024 Gabrovo	MoE, MOEW, SEDA; 13 municipalities; 3 regional authorities; etc.	Need for private investments: Public funds alone are insufficient; local governments play a key role in attracting capital. Planned one stop shops to support local projects.
#7 30/07/2024 Sofia	MoE, MOEW, Ministry of Finance; 10 municipalities; 3 regional authorities; etc.	Updated NECP near completion, with final revisions incorporating stakeholder feedback. Over €11 billion in available funding for climate policies by 2030, but stronger coordination and science-based approaches are needed for effective use.



Photos above: national dialogues organized in Bulgaria. © NECPlatform



CROATIA



About REGEA



The North-West Croatia Regional Energy and Climate Agency (REGEA) is a public, non-profit institution established in 2008, serving as a key energy and climate agency in Croatia.

With extensive experience in local-level implementation and strong partnerships with national institutions, REGEA acts as a bridge between different levels of governance while working towards energy transition and adaptation to climate change. Within the NECPlatform project, REGEA led the platform in Croatia, ensuring inclusive and continuous multi-level dialogue on climate and energy policies.

The agency has been instrumental in facilitating cooperation across sectors and has gained national and EU-wide recognition for its coordination efforts.



“The active participants of a high number of stakeholders from the national, local and regional levels, as well as a wide range of sectors, combined with a participatory approach, have enabled an inclusive environment in Croatia’s multilevel dialogues and contributed to the development of relevant energy and climate measures which are well understood, as are the pathways for their implementation.”

Julije Domac, Managing Director, REGEA

Main achievements

Over the course of the project, REGEA organised and **facilitated seven multilevel dialogues**, focusing on core issues such as NECP development, green financing, local implementation barriers, and institutional frameworks. **More than 200 participants attended the dialogues**, including representatives from **nine ministries, over 100 local and regional government units**, the academic sector, NGOs, and private sector actors. The consistency in attendance and active participation over two and a half years underscores the strong demand for such dialogue and its relevance to climate and energy policies.

REGEA's role as the facilitator of these dialogues was **officially recognised by the Ministry of Economy** and noted in the Government's rationale accompanying the adoption of the updated National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP). Furthermore, the NECPlatform project is referenced directly in the final revised NECP and the NECPR, validating the project's national impact and relevance.

In March 2025, the final, seventh multilevel dialogue focused on **green budgeting and sustainable financing**, organised in partnership with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economy. The discussion covered upcoming obligations, new methodologies for tracking climate-related measures, and the importance of early local involvement and IT system upgrades. Particular emphasis was placed on the growing significance of climate-compatible projects for attracting both public and private investment.

REGEA also presented the Croatian CED Case Study before the European Committee of the Regions at the final project conference in Brussels. Croatia's approach was also highlighted as one of the leading examples of multilevel climate governance in action and successful stakeholder engagement.

Looking forward, efforts are underway to **institutionalise this platform through formal working groups and continued coordination with the Croatian ministries**. REGEA remains committed to supporting this transition and serving as a facilitator that connects knowledge, actors, and practice between national and local levels.



Photo above: national dialogues organized in Croatia. © NECPlatform



"NECPlatform in Croatia shows that when institutions, municipalities, and sectors work together, energy transition and adaptation to climate change are not only possible, but can be better governed, better funded, and more inclusive."

Miljenko Sedlar, Head of Climate, REGEA

Hvar, Croatia. © Shana Van Roosbroek, Unsplash

National dialogues

CED # Date Place	Main stakeholders	Highlights from the discussion
#1 21/03/2023 Zagreb	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development; REGEA; Ministry of Science and Education; Association of Cities; local and regional government units; NGOs; academia	First national-level dialogue launched NECPlatform. Emphasis was placed on aligning NECP measures with local realities, consolidating policy actions, and defining clear indicators.
#2 18/05/2023 Online	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development; REGEA; Energy Institute Hrvoje Požar; Association of Cities; local and regional government units	Dialogue with local governments focused on their legal obligations under NECP and the role of planning documents. Discussed support mechanisms and funding sources for implementation.
#3 13/07/2023 Zagreb	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development; Ministry of Labour and Pension System, Family and Social Policy; NGOs; Association of Cities; local and regional government units	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (Now Ministry of Economy, as of May 2024) presented the updated NECP. Stakeholders discussed emissions trends and sectoral contributions to climate neutrality.
#4 28/02/2024 Zagreb	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Spatial Planning, Construction and State Property; Energy Institute Hrvoje Požar; banks; Croatian Green Building Council	Focused on the building sector, financing energy renovation, and linking NECP goals with financial market instruments. Discussed data transparency and institutional coordination.
#5 23/04/2024 Zagreb	Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Economy; Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds; Association of Cities; local and regional government units; NGOs	Introduced green budgeting and explored how local authorities can integrate climate goals into budget planning. Technical assistance and fiscal alignment were highlighted as priorities.
#6 14/11/2024 Zagreb	Ministry of Economy; Ministry of Finance; Association of Cities; international guests (e.g. Sweden, Hungary, Romania); LGUs	Shared European good practices on governance and finance. Local barriers in accessing funding were discussed, as well as opportunities to institutionalize dialogue structures in Croatia.
#7 31/03/2025 Zagreb	Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Economy; Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds; local and regional government units; academia; NGOs; financial institutions	Final dialogue focused on green budgeting, national and EU obligations, and the importance of early involvement of LGUs. Platform sustainability and working group models were discussed.



Photos above: Zagreb, Croatia © Kristijan Arsov, Unsplash. National dialogues organized in Croatia. © NECPlatform

FRANCE



About Energy Cities

Energy Cities is the European association of local authorities driving the energy transition, bringing together over 1,000 cities and towns.

Headquartered in France, the organisation has a strong historical and operational presence in the country, with a wide network of members, partners, and long-standing institutional relationships. As the national lead for NECPlatform in France, Energy Cities was particularly well positioned to steer the national dialogue thanks to its in-depth understanding of local needs, its credibility as a neutral facilitator, and its capacity to link national discussions with broader European debates.

In addition to leading the project's overall coordination and communication, Energy Cities took the lead in establishing and facilitating the dialogue platform in France, ensuring inclusive and balanced representation of stakeholders from all governance levels.



"This project has shown the importance of constantly adapting to the political context in order to be relevant and meet the demands of the participants in the dialogue platform. It's challenging but very rewarding."

Thibaut Maraquin, Project Manager and Co-Director, Energy Cities

Main achievements

In France, the NECPlatform revealed that while numerous institutional frameworks for multi-level dialogue already exist, local authorities often feel unheard or underrepresented. Rather than duplicating efforts, our strategy focused on enhancing the effectiveness of existing mechanisms through two thematic cycles of dialogue.

The first dialogue cycle addressed financing the ecological transition. It led to the drafting of a [policy note](#) on state-local government contractual arrangements, which analysed current mechanisms and proposed concrete recommendations to improve their transparency, efficiency, and accessibility. The note particularly focused on the “Ecological Transition Contracts” and highlighted structural shortcomings that limit their impact on local climate action.

The second dialogue cycle explored the newly established Regional Conferences of the Parties (COPs), introduced by the French government in 2024. These regional COPs aim to localise national climate objectives. The [resulting note](#) proposed governance improvements to ensure these forums become inclusive, action-oriented, and better connected to the realities of local actors. It also stressed the importance of embedding civil society and inter-municipal cooperation in their functioning.

Both policy notes were grounded in exchanges with local and regional authorities, parliamentarians, national agencies, and civil society actors. They were shared with relevant ministries and public bodies and publicly presented during the project’s final dialogue event. Overall, NECPlatform in France created a safe and open space for reflection on the complexity of existing multi-level governance mechanisms. It contributed to building a shared understanding of the structural gaps and generated actionable recommendations to improve coordination between governance levels—key for accelerating the ecological transition.



“We believe that these multilevel dialogues are a prerequisite for the success of the ecological transition. In France, despite recent efforts, local and regional authorities still struggle to be fully integrated into national decision-making. NECPlatform helped bridge that gap.”

Mélanie Bourgeois, Policy Officer, Energy Cities.

Photo: national dialogues organized in France. © NECPlatform

National dialogues

CED # Date Place	Main stakeholders	Highlights from the discussion
#1 31/05/2023 Paris	Local/regional authorities, national agencies, CSOs	Mapping of dialogue structures; gaps in communication; under-addressed financial/human needs.
#2 16/11/2023 Paris	Local and regional authorities and agencies, member of the french parliament, national environment agencies, civil society organisations	Focus on financing tools; critical review of state-local contracts.
#3 02/02/2024 Online	Local and regional authorities and agencies, member of the french parliament, civil society organisations	Recommendations on improving state-local financing and the Territorial Climate Fund.
#4 20/09/2024 Paris	Local and regional authorities and agencies, national government and agencies, civil society organisations	Assessment of new regional COPs: strengths, limitations, and early feedback.
#5 29/11/2024 Paris	Local and regional authorities and agencies, national government and agencies, civil society organisations	Agreement on governance recommendations for regional COPs.
#6 06/03/2025 Paris	Civil society organisations, citizens, local and regional authorities and agencies	Public event: shared results; future vision for regional COPs and climate financing.



Photo: national dialogues organized in France. © NECPlatform

ITALY



Siena, Italy. © Alessandro Stech, Unsplash

About Coordinamento Agende 21 Locali Italiane

Coordinamento Agende 21 Locali Italiane is an Italian association of local and regional authorities working together to promote sustainability through shared projects and policies at the local, national, and EU levels.

With a long-standing **experience in facilitating dialogue** between institutions and in coordinating territorial strategies on climate and energy, the association was well positioned to lead NECPlatform in Italy. Our members include municipalities, provinces, and regions, many of which are at the forefront of implementing climate and energy policies. Thanks to our wide **institutional network** and consolidated relationships with **civil society, academia, and national authorities**, we were able to create an inclusive and representative Climate and Energy Dialogue Platform, in line with Article 11 of the Governance Regulation.

Our mission is to strengthen local governments' capacity to act on climate while ensuring **coherence and alignment** with national and EU framework.



“Through NECPlatform, we proved that structured dialogue between national and local actors is possible and necessary. The process itself became a catalyst for awareness, cooperation, and capacity-building, all of which are essential for the long-term success of climate strategies. It brought together actors who had never shared a space before and helped align local concerns with national goals: a crucial step toward more effective and democratic climate policy.”

Renata Zuffi, President of Coordinamento Agende 21.

Main achievements

The Italian Climate and Energy Dialogue Platform (CED), coordinated by Coordinamento Agende 21 Locali Italiane, enabled the activation of a structured dialogue on climate and energy policies between different levels of government and stakeholders. Key achievements include:

- ✔ **Strong and diverse engagement of stakeholders in the Italian Climate and Energy Dialogue (CED) platform:** Participants came from multiple sectors and levels of governance, including local and regional authorities (including cities involved in the EU Mission for Climate-Neutral), research institutions, civil society organizations, national and regional energy and environmental agencies, private companies and trade associations and representatives from the Ministry of Environment and Energy Security (MASE). This heterogeneity allowed for a more nuanced and representative discussion of national energy and climate priorities and helped reinforce the credibility and relevance of the recommendations produced.
- ✔ **Drafting of a national Position Paper:** presenting recommendations for improving the NECP with a focus on multilevel governance, data coordination, coherence between plans, and the central role of local governments. The paper was officially submitted to MASE in March 2024 and shared with relevant stakeholders.
- ✔ **Strengthening of a multilevel community:** through collaboration with other EU-funded projects and initiatives (e.g. IN-PLAN, EU-Cities Mission, EU Peers, Capacities), reinforcing the legitimacy and visibility of the CED and ensuring alignment and exchanges with broader climate governance discussions.
- ✔ **Fostering continuity of the multilevel dialogue beyond the project:** while the Italian CED has not received formal institutional recognition, the project sparked interest in continuing the dialogue. Discussions are underway to ensure the continuation of the platform as a forum for regular exchange among stakeholders and with national institutions, especially in light of the upcoming implementation and monitoring phases of the NECP and the drafting of the forthcoming Social Climate Plan.
- ✔ **Drafting of a national policy brief on multilevel governance in climate and energy policies**
Drawing on the insights gathered throughout the Italian CED meetings, a national policy brief was produced to highlight the benefits and challenges of implementing multilevel governance in the context of climate and energy policies. The document explores the limitations of the current EU regulatory framework—particularly Article 11 of the Governance Regulation—and provides actionable recommendations for strengthening coordination and policy coherence between different levels of government. It emphasizes the key role of local authorities in climate action and the need to formally integrate multilevel governance into national planning tools. The brief also identifies upcoming opportunities, such as the Social Climate Plan, to reinforce participatory and integrated approaches to policy design and implementation.

NECPlatform ...2 anni dopo

Primi risultati e perché è importante
continuare ad investire nella
governance multi-livello

Giulia Pizzini
Senior Expert (IEECP)



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European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



National dialogues

CED # Date Place	Main stakeholders	Highlights from the discussion
#1 03/04/2023 Bologna	Local authorities, CSOs, academia, national experts	Need for shared and updated data to guide local decarbonisation plans; Lack of structured funding aligned with territorial energy-climate needs; Insufficient training for local staff; need for integrated capacity building; Integration of mitigation/adaptation in local/regional planning and regulations.
#2 18/05/2023 Padova	Municipalities, associations, research bodies	Importance of involving energy agencies and local actors in the NECP process; Inclusion of energy poverty in the NECP; Models of multilevel governance to support NECP implementation.
#3 17/10/2023 Rome	MASE, local/regional authorities, energy/environment agencies	Climate must be central at all governance levels; call for an Italian Climate Law; Align mitigation and adaptation in national plans; Include in the NECP financing challenges for the climate transition and measures to alleviate Energy Poverty; Leverage lessons from the 100 mission cities; Review Italy's transition actions, governance, and NECP participatory process.
#4 22/03/2024 Rome	MASE, Stakeholders from climate poverty, LRAs, NGOs, EU project reps	The CED was organised within the framework of the national conference on energy poverty: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Presentation of NECPlatform Position Paper with stakeholder proposals – Role of municipalities in tackling energy poverty – SECAPs as tools for local action on emissions and vulnerability.
#5 11/04/2024 Padova	MASE, Mission Cities, local governments, policy experts	Updates on the public consultation, parliamentary investigations, and strategic environmental assessments related to the NECP were provided. Round table on the obstacles Italy faces in achieving its decarbonization goals. Discussions included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Promoting sustainable mobility, urban planning strategies, and fiscal incentives to boost energy efficiency and renewable energy uptake. – Innovation in energy efficiency, exemplified by the University of Padua's Living Lab.

CED # Date Place	Main stakeholders	Highlights from the discussion
#6 10/12/2024 Rome	LRAs, academia, research centres, policy experts, local/regional authorities, Mission Cities	<p>The CED was co-organised with the LIFE project IN-PLAN, which shares a focus on the multilevel integration of policies towards ecological transition.</p> <p>Main discussion points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Interaction between different plans (NECP, NAP, etc.) Local participation experiences, such as Rome's process for its Adaptation Strategy. - Methodologies for integrated territorial, energy, and climate planning. – Role of cities in implementing national policies and a proposed manifesto for collaboration.
#7 27/03/2025 Rome	Policy experts, NGOs, LRAs, Mission Cities, local governments	<p>Urgency to accelerate the ecological transition and improve coordination across governance levels.</p> <p>Importance of integrating just transition, energy poverty and job creation into national and local strategies.</p> <p>Need for a Climate Law and more coherent, transparent use of public funds.</p> <p>Cities called for continuity, collaboration, and recognition of their key role.</p>



“Institutional change takes time. What NECPlatform has shown us is that creating space for dialogue is a necessary first step. Bringing diverse voices together, aligning priorities, building relationships and trust between institutions and local actors are key to lay the groundwork for a more inclusive and structured approach to climate and energy governance.”

Daniela Luise, Director, Coordinamento Agende 21 Locali Italiane

PORTUGAL



Lisbon Portugal, © Tom Byrom, Unsplash

About ZERO

zero.

ZERO – Associação Sistema Terrestre Sustentável is a prominent Portuguese environmental NGO committed to advancing sustainable development, with a strong track record in climate and energy advocacy.

As an independent and technically competent organization, ZERO is uniquely positioned to act as a bridge between national and local stakeholders. Despite not being an association of municipalities, ZERO proactively conducted stakeholder mapping and extensive outreach to local authorities, **successfully engaging 29 municipalities**, intermunicipal entities, and energy agencies. Its recognized credibility in environmental advocacy, combined with a demonstrated ability to shift roles and act as a trusted facilitator, made ZERO the ideal national lead for the NECPlatform. ZERO established effective multilevel dialogues by building relationships with key public entities such as the Portuguese Environment Agency and the Directorate General for Energy and Geology, even amid political transitions and institutional mistrust. The organization's role in coordinating and **hosting four national dialogues** on critical climate and energy topics directly contributed to enhancing the NECP revision process.

These efforts were acknowledged in Portugal's official NECP submission to the European Commission. ZERO's strategic positioning, technical expertise, and commitment to inclusive and transparent dialogue ensured its leadership was both impactful and nationally recognized.



Photo above: national dialogues organized in Portugal. © NECPlatform

Main achievements

During the NECPlatform project, ZERO achieved significant impact across national, regional, and local levels, successfully facilitating multilevel dialogue and influencing climate and energy planning in Portugal.

National level achievements

- ✓ **Institutional recognition:** one of the most impactful results was the explicit mention of ZERO's dialogues in the final version of the National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) submitted to the European Commission, as well as in Portugal's official NECP report (NECPR) submitted in March 2025. This recognition underscores the strategic relevance of the dialogues organized by ZERO in shaping national policy.
- ✓ **Engagement with national authorities:** ZERO secured the participation of key national institutions responsible for NECP revision, notably the Portuguese Environment Agency (APA) and the Directorate General for Energy and Geology (DGEG), throughout all four multilevel dialogues. Despite initial mistrust due to ZERO's advocacy role, the organization successfully repositioned itself as a neutral facilitator, gaining trust and credibility at the national level.
- ✓ **Agenda setting:** the dialogues helped bring critical issues to the forefront, such as financing the climate transition, coherence between national and local strategies, and the need for clearer monitoring and implementation mechanisms — all of which were addressed in the NECP process.

Regional and Local Level Achievements

- ✓ **Broad stakeholder engagement:** ZERO engaged directly with 29 municipalities, intermunicipal entities, and energy agencies, raising awareness about the NECP revision and inviting them to actively participate in the dialogues. This represented a major step in promoting local ownership and alignment with national climate goals.
- ✓ **Capacity building:** recognizing a lack of familiarity among local authorities with the NECP, ZERO conducted capacity-building activities, including targeted communication, stakeholder workshops, and a tailored online survey to gather insights for a comprehensive SWOT analysis.
- ✓ **Creation of a dialogue platform:** although not institutionalized, ZERO successfully established a *de facto* multilevel platform through its four dialogues, which became reference points for cooperation and knowledge exchange across governance levels.
- ✓ **Shared recommendations:** the dialogues enabled joint formulation of recommendations to the national level, particularly on funding mechanisms, regional disparities, legal and structural barriers, and the role of energy communities. These inputs informed national authorities and contributed to the participatory quality of the NECP revision.

“NECPlatform challenged us to step beyond our usual advocacy role and become facilitators of dialogue across all levels of governance. It was a transformative experience — not only for ZERO, but also for the institutions and municipalities we brought together. We proved that constructive, multilevel collaboration is not only possible, but essential for shaping a just and ambitious climate transition in Portugal.”

Francisco Ferreira, President, ZERO – Associação Sistema Terrestre Sustentável

Cross-cutting Achievements

- ✓ **Increased awareness and trust:** ZERO shifted perceptions and is now recognized as a facilitator and expert in multilevel governance and dialogue.
- ✓ **Dissemination of tools:** ZERO translated and shared the project’s “Guidance for the implementation of Climate and Energy Dialogue platforms”, further supporting local authorities in continuing this work beyond the project.
- ✓ **Sustainability outlook:** the project laid the groundwork for potential institutionalization of dialogue platforms in Portugal, promoting continuity and integration of local voices in national policy.



Photo above: national dialogues organized in Portugal. © NECPlatform

National dialogues

CED # Date Place	Main stakeholders	Highlights from the discussion
#1 April 2023 Lisbon	National authorities, municipalities, inter-municipal entities, academia and energy agencies	Alignment of strategies across governance levels.
#2 January 2024 Caldas da Rainha	National authorities, municipalities, inter-municipal entities, academia and energy agencies	Involvement of municipalities and energy agencies.
#3 May 2024 Lisboa	National authorities, municipalities, inter-municipal entities, academia and energy agencies	Financing the climate transition.
#4 January 2025 Seixal	National authorities, municipalities, inter-municipal entities, academia and energy agencies and private sector	Biowaste and biomethane as regional energy solutions.



Photo above: national dialogues organized in Portugal. © NECPlatform



"Multilevel governance is the missing link in effective climate and energy planning. Through NECPlatform, we created spaces where national institutions, local authorities, and other stakeholders could speak openly, align priorities, and co-create solutions. These dialogues were a breakthrough in building trust and ensuring that local realities are reflected in national strategies."

Ana Müller, Project and Policy Officer, ZERO – Associação Sistema Terrestre Sustentável

ROMANIA



Braşov, Romania © Dan Novac, Unsplash

About Energy Cities Romania



Energy Cities Romania (OER) is a national association of local authorities committed to sustainable energy and climate action.

With 30 active member cities, OER has extensive experience facilitating multilevel dialogue and supporting local authorities in aligning with European climate and energy policy. As a trusted partner to central institutions and local governments, OER was positioned to act as the national lead in the NECPlatform project. Our close collaboration with key stakeholders such as Association of Romanian Municipalities (AMR), Association of Romanian Towns (AOR) and Association of Romanian Communes (ACoR), has ensured broad territorial representation and strong grassroots engagement.

This legitimacy, coupled with our technical expertise and ongoing involvement in national policy processes, made OER the ideal facilitator of Romania's Climate and Energy Dialogue (CED) Platform.



The energy transition is no longer a distant horizon, but a reality in progress. Through the “Memorandum for Engaging Local Authorities in the Development and Implementation of National Energy and Climate Policies”, we take a decisive step toward a future where every community becomes an active part of the solution.

Leea Mihăilă, Director of Energy Cities Romania

Main achievements

Through coordinated action at both national and local levels, OER successfully **strengthened multilevel governance in Romania's energy and climate sector**. Nationally, OER influenced policy development, secured institutional recognition and **built lasting platforms for dialogue**. Locally, OER empowered cities to access funding opportunities, overcome legal barriers and amplified local voices in national decision-making. Together, these achievements demonstrate OER's role as a key facilitator of systemic change, **building stronger bridges between national strategies and local action for a more inclusive and effective energy transition**.

During the NECPlatform project, **OER led the implementation of Romania's CED Platform** to ensure inclusive and informed national climate and energy planning. The platform was instrumental in bridging central and local governance levels through seven structured national dialogues, each aligned with NECP priorities such as energy efficiency, energy security, innovation, Energy Communities and local implementation tools.

One of the main achievements was the broad and inclusive participation with the support of the Official Inter-institutional Working Group for NECP revision established by the Ministry of Energy, which **brought together over 96 unique institutions and 380 participants**, with strong representation from both national ministries and local authorities.

OER's contribution was **formally acknowledged in Romania's final National Energy and Climate Plan**, confirming its influence on national policy development and recognition as a credible actor in the energy and climate space.



Photos above: national dialogues organized in Romania. © NECPlatform

Furthermore, **OER played a strategic role in the Official Interinstitutional Working Group for NECP revision established by the Ministry of Energy.** By representing local authorities in this space of over 60 national-level stakeholders, OER ensured that the local dimension was effectively integrated into national planning efforts, strengthening coordination between levels of governance.

In addition, OER actively collaborated with civil society to place the topic of Energy Communities on the public agenda, highlighting the shared responsibility of national and local actors in enabling their development.

The project efforts led to the drafting and broad endorsement of a Memorandum supporting stronger cooperation between governance levels on energy policy. The **Memorandum was signed by 37 stakeholders** – including 19 local authorities, 3 national institutions, 2 local energy agencies, 2 regional development agencies, 5 national associations and 2 academic and private sector entities — and represents a key step toward ensuring the continuity of multilevel governance after the project's conclusion.

At the regional and local level, OER supported cities in accessing new energy opportunities, fostering collaboration and elevating Energy Communities as a practical pathway toward local empowerment and climate resilience.



National dialogues

CED # Date Place	Main stakeholders	Highlights from the discussion
#1 Mar 2023 (part I) Braşov, Apr 2023 (part II) Bucharest	Ministry of Energy (Energy Efficiency Department), Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests as well as 22 local authorities	Need for reliable data to support energy planning.
#2 Feb 2024 Bucharest	Interinstitutional working group, multiple ministries, local authorities	NECP priorities: fossil fuel reduction, renewables, emissions tracking.
#3 Feb 2024 Bucharest	Interinstitutional working group, six Ministries, local authorities	Gaps in program detail, timelines, performance indicators. Funding uncertainty.
#4 Mar 2024 Bucharest	Interinstitutional working group, five Ministries, local authorities	Research, innovation, competitiveness, funding needs for green transition.
#5 Apr 2024 Braşov	Two Ministries, 10 local authorities	Reinforced multilevel governance and the role of local input.
#6 Oct 2024 Bucharest	Ministry of Energy, local and international actors	Financing needs, Energy Communities, better data collection.
#7 Mar 2025 Braşov	Four Ministries, NGOs, local authorities	Legislative and financial tools for NECP implementation; launch of NECPlatform Memorandum signed by 33 organizations and supported by 4 national entities.



Photos above: national dialogues organized in Romania. © NECPlatform



"If we had to draft the NECP again starting tomorrow and could change something, we would strengthen the power and role of local authorities and involve them in the process right from the beginning."

Alexandra Mareş, Advisor, General Directorate for Energy Policies, Ministry of Energy – Romania.

Knowledge transfer – peer learning programme

In the last months of the project, the NECPlatform consortium organised a **Peer Learning Programme (PLP)**, with the aim of transferring the knowledge and the expertise gathered within the project to other national organisations.

Why? So that they could receive information and knowledge on how to best set up or manage their national Climate and Energy Dialogue in their Member State.

10 organisations finally took part in the PLP, namely the Cypriot Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Works; the Romanian Ministry of Energy Department of Energy Efficiency; the Spanish Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge; the Danish Ministry of Climate, Energy and Utilities; the Estonian Ministry of Climate; the Slovenian Ministry of environment, climate and energy; the Irish Department of Environment, Climate and Communications; the Polish Association of Municipalities Polish Network (PNEC) and the Czech Association of Local Energy Managers (SEMMO).

The peer learning activity was organised in three steps

STEP #1 – Introductory training session (online)

The **introductory online training session** was designed to establish a common foundation among participants and foster initial connections.

The session opened with a welcome and informal introductions, allowing participants to get to know one another and begin building a sense of community. A concise presentation followed, providing an overview of Climate and Energy Dialogues (CEDs) and situating them within the broader **EU regulatory framework**, navigating participants through the Governance Regulation and specifically its article 11. Participants were then guided through the experiences of the six countries involved in the NECPlatform pilot phase, offering real-world insights into how CEDs have been structured and implemented in diverse national contexts.

Partners gave an overview not only of the successes they achieved, but also of the obstacles they encountered and how they managed to overcome or work around them. The session concluded with a brief outline of the programme's next steps, setting the stage for deeper exchange and collaboration.



Photos above: Vila do Conde, Portugal. © Kateryna Ivanova, Unsplash. © Molly the Cat, Unsplash

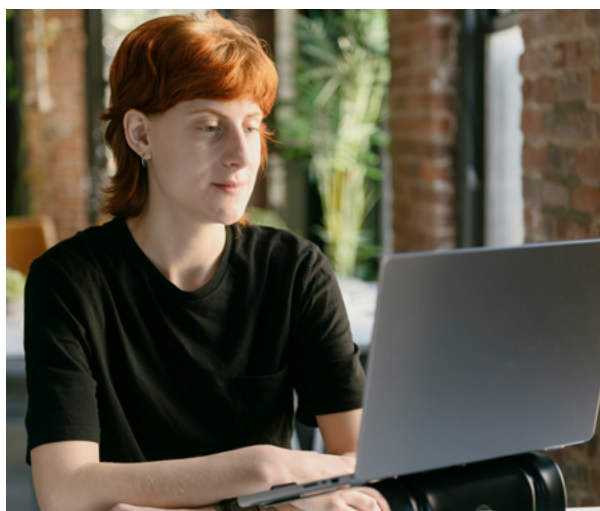


STEP #2 – Twinning with project partners for dedicated mentoring (online)

In the second step of the Peer Learning Programme, participants engaged in **twinning exchanges with NECPlatform project partners**, offering a more focused and interactive learning experience.

Each participant organisation had the opportunity to meet with up to two project partners from the NECPlatform consortium and explore their respective journeys in setting up and managing multi-level Climate and Energy Dialogues. These sessions provided dedicated time for deeper exchange on both **successes and challenges**, allowing for an open discussion of best practices as well as the contextual factors that enabled or hindered progress. A wide range of topics was addressed, including strategies to **effectively involve national authorities**, foster dialogue between diverse stakeholder groups, and design inclusive and transparent processes.

Participants also discussed **practical aspects** such as logistics, facilitation techniques, and participation methodologies, making these exchanges highly relevant and applicable to their own national contexts.



Photos above: © M Cooper, Unsplash

STEP #3 – Intensive training in Brussels (in-person)

The final step of the Peer Learning Programme culminated in a **1.5-day in-person event in Brussels**, offering participants the opportunity to connect face-to-face, deepen discussions, and collectively reflect on the future of multilevel governance in EU climate and energy policy. The programme began with participation in the **NECPlatform high-level final event**, held at the **Committee of the Regions** and hosted by **Josko Klisović**, providing a political and institutional framing for the discussions that followed. The next day (19 March), a full-day **workshop brought together Member State representatives, project partners, and external experts** for an in-depth exploration of key topics, combining expert insights on Articles 10 and 11 of the Governance Regulation with practical case studies from Croatia, Sweden, and Ireland. The afternoon was spent exploring future opportunities for multilevel governance and collaboratively drafted recommendations for improving Article 11, which are the following:



1. Broaden Stakeholder Engagement in CEDs

- ✓ Ensure inclusion of local and regional authorities, civil society, enterprises, academia, and youth organisations.
- ✓ Promote **hybrid facilitation** models involving both government and independent third-party actors to ensure continuity.
- ✓ Create a **flexible yet structured stakeholder pool**, with guidance on actor categories, while allowing national adaptation.



2. Improve Consultation Methodologies

- ✓ Use diverse formats, combining **general and sector-specific workshops**, and offer both **in-person and online** options.
- ✓ Set **clear timelines and agendas** ahead of sessions, and ensure transparent follow-up through **published minutes**.



3. Strengthen Implementation Mechanisms

- ✓ Institutionalise CEDs as **permanent engagement platforms**, not one-off consultations.
- ✓ Foster **vertical and horizontal integration** across governance levels and ministries.
- ✓ Establish **feedback loops** to identify and resolve implementation barriers.
- ✓ Introduce **SMART objectives** to enhance tracking and accountability.



4. Increase Transparency in Reporting

- ✓ Adopt **standardised templates** for Member States to report on CEDs, including:
 - ➔ List of stakeholders involved;
 - ➔ Summary of discussions and outcomes;
 - ➔ Indication of how outcomes influenced policy.
- ✓ Enable **independent verification** of reporting by the European Commission.
- ✓ Provide guidance on **capacity planning** for reporting requirements.
- ✓ Recommend a **flexible but guided framework** for participatory methods, topics, and frequency of engagement.

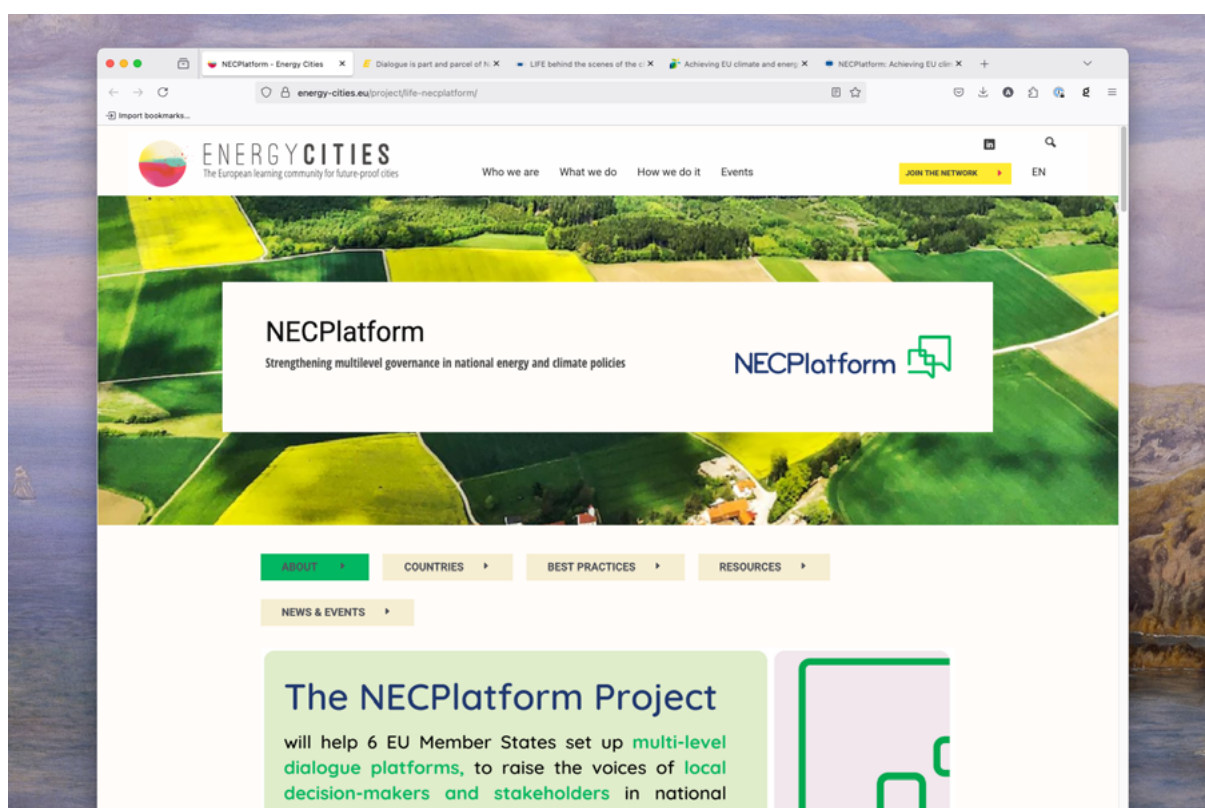
The points summarised above ([here a more comprehensive version](#)) and generally all the outcomes and highlights from the peer learning programme and the high level final event were used to draft the fourth policy brief (see "[Policy recommendations](#)" on page 18).



Communication and Dissemination

The communication and dissemination activities focused on the state of NECPs and national regulations at the beginning of the project and their evolution in the partner's Member States thanks to the dialogues organised and the policy recommendations produced. The target audiences were at EU and national levels.

To do so, a wide variety of digital and physical materials were produced such as power point templates, print postcards, roll-ups, templates for social media, press releases and event promotion, email signatures, infographics and one-pagers. The project also had a [dedicated website](#) with information about the actions, the partners and the state of the NECPs. It also includes the materials produced and a news and events section with articles, press releases and events information.

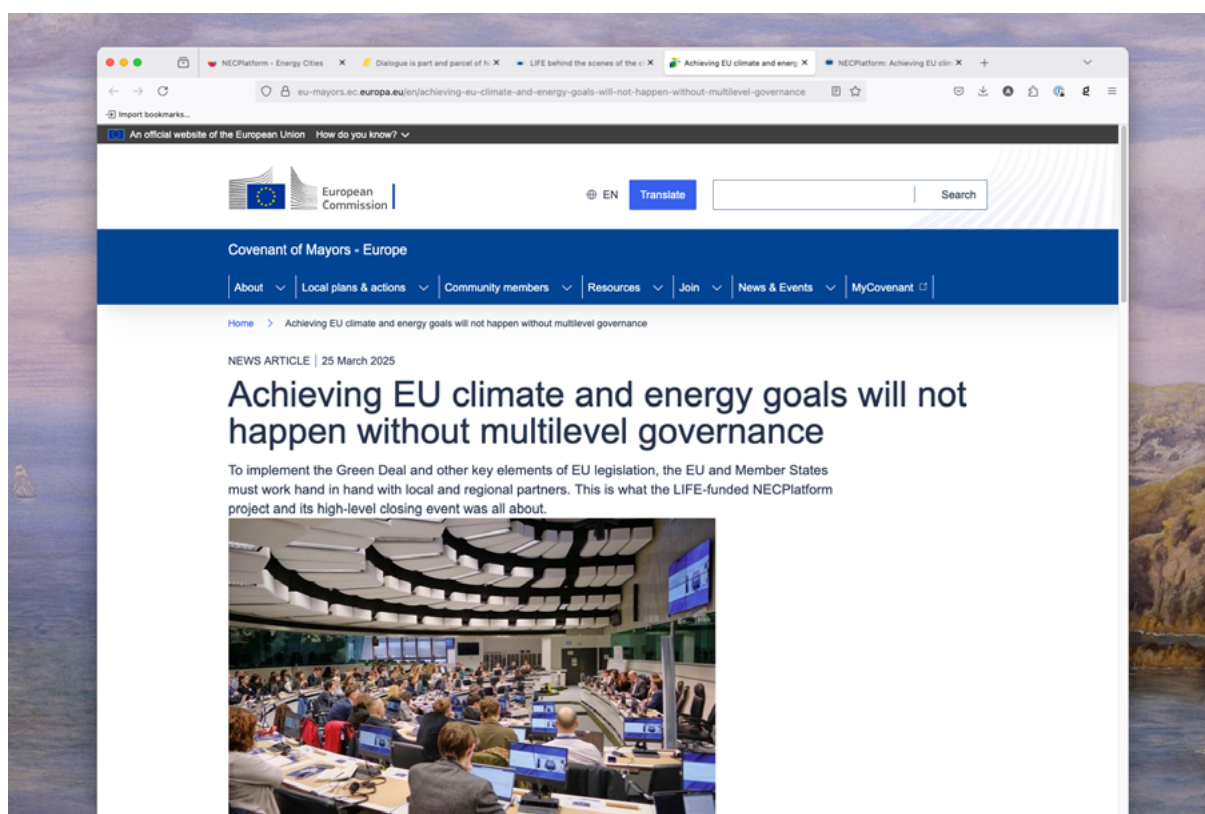
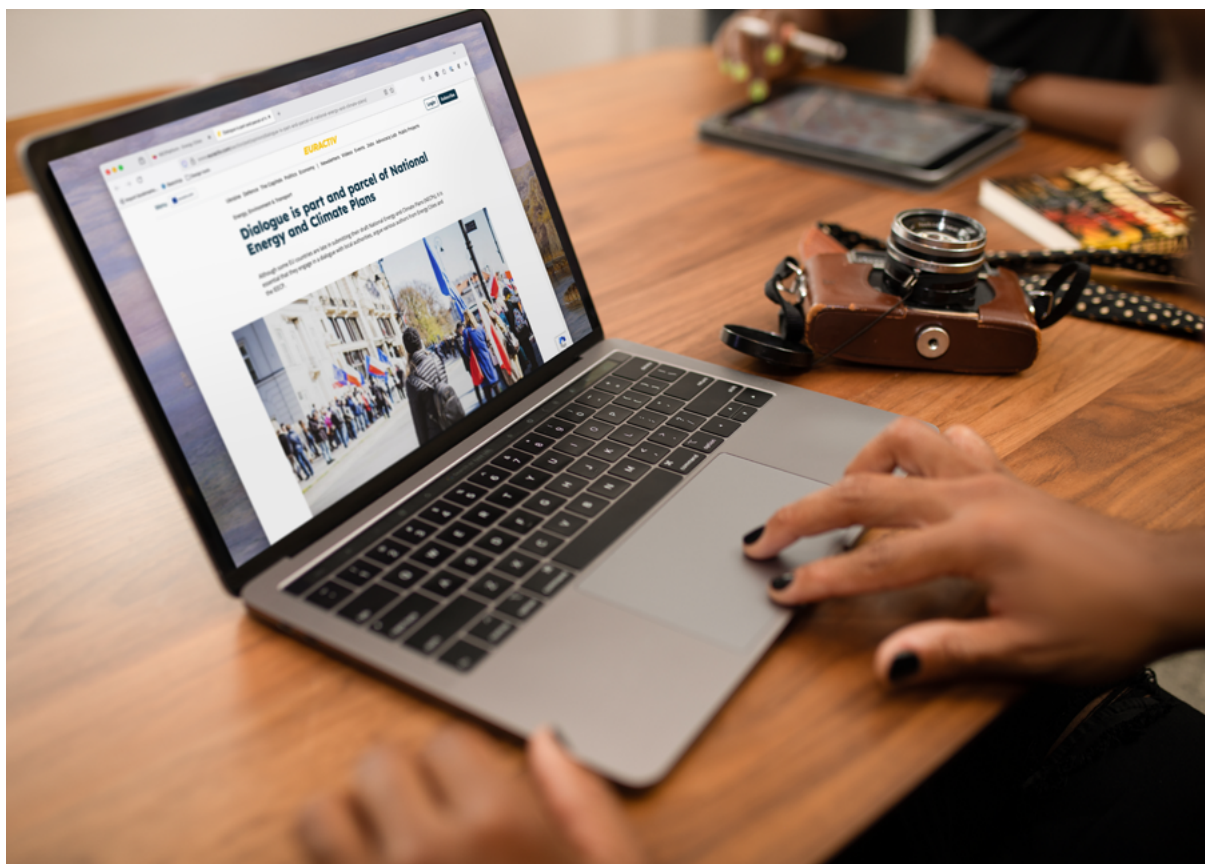


The dissemination of the work and the results of the project was carried out following an EU and national strategy that included social media posts using the hashtag #NECPlatform on different platforms such as LinkedIn, X or YouTube, newsletters and materials uploaded to the project website which helped to reach a wide audience and increase the engagement of relevant stakeholders at both EU and national level. Furthermore, the project was included in media publications such as [Euractiv](#), [CINEA](#), [Covenant of Mayors](#) and [European Committee of the Regions](#).

Events

The dissemination strategy included the presentation of the project in key EU events and the organization of a final event to present the main outcomes.

Photo above: NECPlatform page on Energy Cities website.



Photos above: NECPlatform on Euroactive website, mockup. NECPlatform news article on Covenant of Mayors - Europe website.

EUSEW 2023

During [EUSEW 2023](#), on June 22, we organised a policy session entitled '*Climate neutrality needs concerted action: Why is multi-level energy and climate dialogue the right recipe?*'. It took the form of a dialogue between participants from several initiatives and projects focusing on multi-level governance such as LIFE NECPlatform, CAPACITIES, TOGETHERFOR1.5, national representatives and members of the European Commission – DG Energy and the Committee of the Regions, including Iva Petrova, Deputy Minister of Energy from Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Bulgaria and Andries Gryffroy member of the Flemish Parliament and member of the European Committee of the Regions. [The recording is also available.](#)



Eceee Summer Study 2024

NECPlatform was presented June 11, 2024 at the eceee Summer study in France. [Download the presentation.](#) [See the abstract.](#)

The publication behind this presentation is accessible: "[Multi-level governance: involving subnational authorities and other stakeholders in national energy and climate policy making](#)".

Photo below: NECPlatform presented at the eceee summer study, 2024. @NECPlatform



Final Event

The final event took place at the European Committee of the Regions on the March 18, 2025. *'Multi-Level Governance: A Key to EU Climate & Energy Goals'* presented the findings of the project and led to meaningful discussions about the importance of multi-level governance and the need to keep fostering multi-level dialogues.

It included interventions from high level speakers such as Urszula Zielińska, Secretary of State in the Polish Ministry of Climate and Environment, Joško Klisović, President of Zagreb City Assembly and Committee of the Regions member and Paula Abreu Marques, Deputy Director DG ENER.A, Energy Policy: Strategy and Coordination, European Commission.

[The video](#) filmed during the event includes a summary of the achievements made thanks to the project and interviews with some of the speakers.

Who we are

European Level



National Level



Team

ENC

Energy Cities is a community of several hundred local authority representatives from 30 countries across Europe. We showcase concrete alternatives deployed by cities, we advocate to change politic and economic governance at all levels and we foster a wide cultural change leading to a futureproofed society.



**Thibaut
MARAQUIN**

Project manager and overall coordination at Energy Cities

Overall coordination of the project, co-coordination of the activities in France.



**Mélanie
BOURGEOIS**

Policy and advocacy officer at Energy Cities

Co-organisation of the dialogues in France, contribution to EU policy work.



**Alicia
FUNES MORO**

Communication and membership officer at Energy Cities

Co-coordination of the overall NECPlatform project and French communication activities.



**Valentine
CROSSE**

Communication and membership officer at Energy Cities.

Co-coordination of the overall NECPlatform project and French communication activities.

IEECP

The Institute for European Energy and Climate Policy is a non-profit independent research organisation. It acts as a knowledge-hub sharing pragmatic results as well as innovative ideas providing policymakers, and all private and public decision-makers, independent expertise and science-based research to support their work towards the energy transition and a sustainable future. Working, since 2015, on science-based climate change mitigation and adaptation, energy efficiency and renewable energy policy, IEECP's international interdisciplinary team of experts generating and disseminating scientific knowledge is dedicated to proposing data-driven solutions, hands-on solutions and policies as well as strategic communication.



Giulia PIZZINI

Lead of the Local Action for Energy and Climate Team

Overall project co-coordination; Support to national teams for local activities; Lead of policy work; Contacts with European Commission; Research on multi-level governance.



Marine PERRIO

Lead of the Communication Team

Co-coordination of communication activities; Events Organisation.



Jen HEEMANN

Senior Expert

Coordination of internal peer learning activities; Coordinator of Knowledge Transfer (Peer Learning Programme).



Jérémy CLERO

Expert

Support to national partners; Policy work; Research on multi-level governance.



Giulia VIERO

Expert

Support with policy work.



Anousheh PARSAEI

Communication Expert

Support in report drafting and communication activities.



Giulia FRACASSI

Intern

Support with report drafting and policy work.

Photos above are from the personal archives.

ENEFFECT

The Center for Energy Efficiency EnEffect is a non-profit organization founded in 1992 in Sofia, Bulgaria, to promote energy conservation across public life. For over 30 years, it has supported central and local authorities, as well as the private sector, in advancing sustainable energy through research and investment projects.



**Dragomir
TZANEV**

Executive Director

Coordination of project activities in Bulgaria; Contacts with high-level officials; Moderation at events; Communication activities.



**Zdravko
GENCHEV**

*Chairman of the
Management Board*

Contacts with high-level officials.



**Kamen
SIMEONOV**

Project Manager

Coordination of project activities, Organization of Climate and Energy Dialogues; Reporting from dialogues.



**Aleksander
STANKOV**

Project Manager

Support for organization of Climate and Energy Dialogues.



**Antoniya
NOVAKOVA**

Project Manager

Support for organization of Climate and Energy Dialogues; Reporting from dialogues.



**Teodora
STANISHEVA**

Communication officer

Communication activities.

REGEA

REGEA – the North-West Croatia Regional Energy and Climate Agency – was established on April 1st, 2008, by the City of Zagreb and the Counties of Krapina-Zagorje, Karlovac, and Zagreb, within the framework of the Intelligent Energy Europe programme. As a public, non-profit institution, REGEA plays a leading role in accelerating the energy transition by supporting the implementation of investment projects, offering expert advisory services, and fostering innovative solutions in the fields of sustainable energy and climate action. Today, REGEA is an active partner across the European Union, contributing to the achievement of EU climate and energy targets through its technical, financial, and policy expertise.



Miljenko SEDLAR

*Head of Climate
Department*

Leading the establishment, coordination, and strategic positioning of REGEA as the national facilitator of the platform in Croatia, ensuring effective multilevel dialogue between local, regional, and national stakeholders.



Hrvoje MARAS

Head of Finance

Close collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, financial coordination of the project within REGEA.



Ivana BELIĆ

*Head of Strategic
Communications*

Co-organisation of CEDs, internal and external strategic communication.



**Tomislav
NOVOSEL**

Expert Advisor

Support of the implementation of the CED in Croatia, project management.



Simona TRŠINAR

Senior Project Manager

Project Manager, lead of operational activities, organisation and logistics of CEDs, data gathering and analysis.

Photos above are from the personal archives.

CA21

The Italian Local Agenda 21 Coordination is an association of local authorities, in a network with other public and private entities, for the development of sustainable development strategies and the realisation of sustainability initiatives in the territories.



Daniela LUISE

Project manager

Co-organisation of CEDs, Contacts with high-level officials; Moderation at events.



Claudia FORZAN

Financial manager

Overall management of Italian activities, Co-organisation of CEDs.



Teresa DITADI

Project officer

Project Manager, lead of operational activities, organisation and logistics of CEDs, data gathering and analysis.

ZERO

ZERO – Associação Sistema Terrestre Sustentável is a Portuguese non-governmental organization founded in 2015, focused on promoting environmental, social, and economic sustainability. Its mission is based on achieving five key goals: zero fossil fuels, zero pollution, zero waste of resources, zero destruction of ecosystems and biodiversity, and zero social and economic inequality. ZERO engages in projects, campaigns, and international networks to influence public policies and foster a more just and sustainable society.



Francisco FERREIRA

President

Contacts with high-level officials; Moderation at events.



Ana MÜLLER

Project and Policy Officer

Overall management of Portuguese activities, strategic communication, project manager.



Acácio PIRES

Member of the General Council and Policy Officer

Moderation of events, support activities.

Photos above are from the personal archives.

OER

Energy Cities Romania (OER) brings together local authorities involved in the energy transition towards climate-neutral communities. OER represents local authorities in relation to national institutions and supports them in implementing efficient energy and climate policies. We also offer support in developing energy and climate strategies for local authorities. Additionally, we advocate for local initiatives focused on energy efficiency at the national level, targeting relevant organizations and decision-makers.



**Leea
MIHAILĂ**

Director

Overall management of the Romanian activities and strategic communication.



**Anca
GRIGORE**

Project manager

Financial management and logistical coordination.



**Mariana
ȚÎNȚĂREAN**

Project manager

Project management, diplomacy and policy coordination.



About the Project

The NECPlatform LIFE-funded project supported, from 2022 to 2025 six EU Member States (Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Italy, Portugal, and Romania) in setting up and managing permanent multilevel Climate and Energy Dialogue (CED) Platforms, as mandated by Article 11 of the Governance Regulation. These dialogues helped foster vertical and horizontal integration of energy and climate policies.

www.energy-cities.eu/project/life-necplatform

