



CEESEU-DIGIT

Central and Eastern European Sustainable Energy Union's Design and Implementation of regional Government Initiatives for a just energy Transition

NECP Statement CEESEN

2024



Co-funded by
the European Union

The project is financed by the European Union's LIFE programme.
Administration number: LIFE21-CET-LOCAL-CEESEU-DIGIT/101077297.
Project acronym: LIFE21-CET-LOCAL-CEESEU-DIGIT.

NECP Statement CEESEN

With one aim of the Central and Eastern European Sustainable Energy Network (CEESEN) being to increase communication, cooperation and interaction among local public administrators, stakeholders and policy makers at multiple levels and in multiple directions,¹ and with only some weeks remaining for Member states to revise their National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs), CEESEN took stock of the NECP plans of those countries participating in the EC-funded CEESEU-DIGIT project.²

We looked at several crucial topics in the NECPs relevant to the CEESEN network and its members. Regrettably, energy communities remain underdeveloped in Central and Eastern Europe. Meanwhile, an estimated 42 million citizens are unable to keep their house adequately warm EU-wide, where the relatively colder climates and poorer housing stock in Central and Eastern European countries results in their citizens being disproportionately affected by energy poverty.³ In line with the CEESEN aim stated above, we also examined how participation in drafting the NECPs was organized and if (and how) countries clearly plan to phase out fossil fuels from their energy mix.⁴

DIGIT partners within CEESEN welcome the European Commission's **December Country Specific recommendation**⁵ that encourages Member States to refine their NECPs, in which the Commission also calls for the promotion of self-consumption and an enabling framework for developing renewable energy communities and energy sharing. The recommendation additionally urges States to clearly define energy poverty, to assess the number of energy poor households, and to set a target to reduce the number of energy poor households. In this regard, we took the opportunity to compare the six DIGIT countries' NECPs in greater detail through a "traffic light approach" by identifying concrete best practices and contrasting these with poor practices.

We urge the other Central and Eastern European Member states to follow suit the described best practices of leaders and improve their policies and measures to eradicate energy poverty and strengthen citizen-led energy projects in their final NECPs due the 30th of June.

This will enable Member states to more rapidly attain their climate goals, broaden the social acceptance of the transition, and empower their (vulnerable) citizens.

We divide the traffic light into the following categories:

- Leaders (clear enabling frameworks, address challenges, include objectives and/or targets)
- Learners (vague description of policy and measures or needs improvement)
- Laggards (no specific mentions of policy and measures and/or counter-productive)

¹ <https://ceesen.org/en/>

² Estonia, Latvia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Croatia and Slovenia

³ https://www.feantsa.org/public/user/PDFs/reports/Report_-_Energy_prices_and_energy_poverty_in_Eastern_Europe.pdf

⁴ <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/news-media/press-releases/energy-poverty-42-million-people-eu-cannot-afford-heat-their-homes-adequately>

⁵ https://commission.europa.eu/energy-climate-change-environment/implementation-eu-countries/energy-and-climate-governance-and-reporting/national-energy-and-climate-plans_en

We investigated four issues that should be included in the NECPs:

1. Ensure to enshrine a clear definition of energy poverty, indicate clear measurements and objectives and report on policies and measures to address energy poverty in accordance with Directive (EU) 2023/1791 and Recommendation (EU) 2023/2407⁶

Leaders	Learners	Laggards
<p>Slovenia has identified 7.2% of its households as being energy poor and set itself a clear target – to reduce this to between 3.8% and 4.6% by 2030. This target is supported by a credible set of measures, including a project office, the set-up of informal information and awareness-raising networks, energy advice, and the financing of 3.500 and 10.500 energy efficient renovations and RES investments, respectively.</p>	<p>Poland clearly defines energy poverty in its NECP and has assessed the number of energy poor households through various indicators. Although it has measures in place, it does not include specific measures to reduce energy poverty as such and has not set itself a clear reduction target for 2030.</p>	<p>Estonia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary and Latvia NECPs mention energy poverty, but have neither clear definitions nor indicators to identify energy poor households.</p> <p>Croatia, Estonia, Hungary and Latvia do mention vulnerable households, but do not clearly link them to energy poverty - instead they use the income census to define vulnerability.</p>

2. Ensure adequate reporting and implementation on the main elements of the enabling frameworks for energy communities, renewables self-consumers, in accordance with Art. 22(5) and 21(6) of the REDII and Art. 20(b)(7) of the Governance regulation and to include concrete National Objectives and Targets⁷

Leaders	Learners	Laggards
<p>The Czech NECP highlights the strong social, environmental and economic co-benefits of energy communities as the political basis for a strong enabling framework. Supportive policies are detailed in Czech and Slovenian NECPs, including simplified permitting, awareness raising campaigns, and public financing instruments, such as the Recovery Facility.</p>	<p>While barriers to establish energy communities in Croatia are still numerous, the current draft NECP recognizes these and states an intention to improve legislation to address these barriers while building the capacities of a wide group of stakeholders.</p>	<p>Estonia, Hungary, Latvia and Poland mention and/or describe energy communities, but fail to set concrete measures, targets, and indicators to encourage their uptake.</p>

⁶ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202302407

⁷ <https://communitypowercoalition.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Driving-the-transition-NECP-Brief-2.pdf>

3. Ensure public participation (citizens, civil society and local authorities) and facilitating multi-level governance and dialogue with local actors (regions, municipalities and energy agencies)

Leaders	Learners	Laggards
<p><i>"The Lithuanian NECP - (not yet a CEESEN member) - conducted a thorough consultation process including government officials, civil society and other relevant stakeholder groups in five meaningful working groups that resulted in changes in the revised NECP. Also did Estonia create a dedicated website for its NECP and put in place Multilevel Energy and Climate Dialogue platform."</i>⁸</p>	<p>In Slovenia the public consultation included a public presentation, online consultations (for roughly 1 month) and six targeted issue-based consultations.⁷</p> <p>In Estonia the NECP was constructed from different sectoral development plans in which structural consultation and engagement with different stakeholders took place.</p> <p>Croatia organized several multilevel dialogues and workshops to facilitate the NECP revision process. However, the timeline to provide comprehensive input to the final draft NECP was too short and not well facilitated.</p>	<p>In Poland, Latvia and Hungary there is no official platform for a Multilevel Energy and Climate Dialogue. In both countries, public consultations were not early and meaningful, while the timelines to provide comments were significantly short or the format such as in the Czech Republic to provide comments was not adequate.⁸</p>

4. Ensure a clear plan and timeline for the phase out of fossil fuels and subsidies in place and refrain from additional investments in fossil fuel infrastructures.

Leaders	Learners	Laggards
<p>The Czech Republic has included a timeline on the phase-out of coal for electricity and heat production. However, it has yet to identify specific measures and legislation that would lead to the planned coal phase-out.</p>	<p>Estonia intends to end additional investments in fossil fuels and electricity production from oil shale by 2035 by putting forward ambitious measures to accelerate the roll-out of renewables but does not provide details on the phasing out of subsidies for either fossil fuels or oil shale production.</p> <p>Poland and Latvia NECPs lack a clear plan and timeline to phase out coal (Poland) and gas (Poland and Latvia) in their economies.</p>	<p>Significant expansion of fossil infrastructure is foreseen in the NECPs of Croatia, Slovenia, and Hungary.</p> <p>A budget has not been proposed for the deployment of renewable energy production or renovating the dwellings of energy poor households.</p>

⁸ <https://communitypowercoalition.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Driving-the-transition-NECP-Brief-2.pdf>

For further information and/or elaboration of our demands, please get in touch:

(Change emails for national representatives)

Hector Charles Pagan

Sustainability Programme Manager, UTARTU

hector.pagan@ut.ee

Elis Vollmer

Climate & Energy project manager, UTARTU

elis.vollmer@ut.ee

For more info on our network:

<https://ceesen.org>

info@ceesen.org

