

**Event summary: “European governance for Just and Fair Transition: reflecting on the NECP revision process and looking ahead”  
Reform Institute’s policy brief premiere (06.02.2025)**

**Summary of presentations:**

Presentations:

- **Just Transition governance in the NECPs. Assessment results for four final NECPs – summary**, *Maria Niewitata - Rej, Climate and Energy Policy Analyst, Reform Institute,*  
*The results of the assessment of Polish, Bulgarian, Italian and German draft and final NECPs were summarised, including the scoring system and the criteria that were taken into account.*
- **Reflecting on the NECP revision process and looking ahead. 6 recommendations to strengthen just and fair governance**, *Michal Wojtylo, Public Policy Analyst, Reform Institute,*  
*Reform Institute’s new policy brief “European governance for Just and Fair Transition: reflecting on the NECP revision process and looking ahead” was presented.*

All of the mentioned Reform Institute’s publications are available [here](#).

**Summary of the discussion:**

**Introduction:**

On February 6, 2025, the Reform Institute held a webinar to discuss the results of its work on a methodological framework for evaluating the updated National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs) with a focus on a just and fair transition, which was implemented in collaboration with ECCO, BlueLink Foundation and Ecologic Institute. During the online meeting, a policy brief was presented, describing the conclusions from the NECP process with recommendations for further action in the European just and transition governance field, including consideration of a revision of the Governance Regulation,.

The event was attended by more than 20 NGO representatives and European experts in the areas of EU governance and just and fair transition who shared their feedback on the presented results, their relevant experiences, and recommendations.

The discussion started with three insightful expert comments from:

- **Mags Bird**, Senior Policy Officer – Climate & Energy – Just Transition, WWF European Policy Office;
- **Nora Kögel**, Researcher in Ecologic Institute;
- **Caitlin McIlhennon**, Environmental Justice Network Ireland Research & Policy Coordinator.

**Guiding questions for the discussion:**

- What is the participants’ evaluation of the final NECPs and their process of making them?

- How should issues related to just and fair transition be included in the Governance Regulation and other EU-related documents?
- Should there be a separate European regulation/directive in the just and fair transition area? Or maybe a toolbox solution such as Just and Fair Transition Plan (like REPowerEU)?

#### Main challenges:

- The current NECPs are often mediocre in the just and fair transition dimension. There is still not enough research on the question of the reasons behind that.
- Oftentimes, the territorial and distributional aspects of just and fair transition are considered separately. Current EU and national just and fair transition policies are too scattered between different strategic documents with no clear flagship initiative.
- The discussion around the just transition was very often too centred on employment issues and not enough on the overall social justice of the green transition. There is still no clarity on the scope of the fair and just transition issue in the context of the EU and national policy frameworks, its meaning remains elusive.
- There is a gap between ambition, commitment, and implementation in the just and fair transition policy on the EU and national level. There is a lack of proper monitoring tools in the area.
- The political will on the national level is crucial for addressing the implementation gap. Political turmoil in the Member States can derail and delay the implementation of the just and fair transition policies.
- It was challenging for civil society to significantly engage in the NECP preparation process, as the public consultations in the Member States were very often insufficient.
- Mobilising new EU funds for the just and fair transition policy poses a significant challenge as there are multiple threats needed to be addressed and there is no agreement on the new sources of financing for the EU.
- Currently, passing new dedicated legislation on the EU level could be challenging so other ways forward should be considered, such as including the issue in the already planned Commission's initiatives or strengthening non-legislative actions in the area.
- Such holistic and complex issues as just and fair transition policy need time to be effectively implemented on the national and local level. Energy poverty is – in comparison to other topics in just and fair transition dimension, like transport poverty – one of the best-covered in the NECPs as it has already been on the EU agenda for some time and is directly covered in the Governance Regulation requirements for the Plan.

#### Key recommendations:

- To increase the coherence of the NECPs and other similar documents produced by Member States, the topic of just and fair transition should be directly reflected in relevant binding templates. Relying only on the guidance from the EC is insufficient.
- The availability of the EU funding and the conditionality of its disbursement (as in Recovery and Resilience Fund and Social Climate Fund) motivates the Member States to submit higher quality plans on time. The EU funding dedicated to the area is crucial for the planning, monitoring and implementation to succeed.

- Non-legislative support for Member States from the EU level, such as Technical Support Instrument, is essential for positive change in the area of just and fair governance.
- Inclusive and comprehensive dialogue and public consultations in the Member States are important for any policies and documents concerning just and fair transition.
- In the EU-level discussions, there is a need to create “lighthouses” for the just and fair transition policies so the topic is more visible. This role could be played by the Just and Fair Transition Action Plan proposed by the Reform Institute. Also, Territorial Just Transition Plans could be important as well, as they can contain a broader and more accessible vision for the regional energy transition than in sectoral, specific documents. Another document on which the communication could be built is the Guidance to Member States for updated NECPs 2021-2030 which comprehensively tackles the issue of including social dimension in the strategic document.

### Final conclusions and next steps

Looking at the current discussions on the EU level, as topics such as competitiveness and security are given the headlines, the importance of the just and fair transition policy can be forgotten. Just and fair transition is not only crucial to ensure social acceptance of green transition, but also for it to be effective and achievable.

Lessons learnt from the NECP revision process will be crucial for other strategic documents required to be submitted by the Member States. The lack of consistency between the NECPs and other national strategies in important cross-cutting themes such as just and fair transition should be tackled. The holistic approach is also important to address both territorial and distributional aspects of just and fair transition, as the place-based approach in policy-making is needed to be tied to wider national planning.

Going forward, there has to be caution on how far to define the just and fair transition. It is useful to leave some space for the Member States to manoeuvre in their policy-making and include national and local specifics when designing just and fair transition policies. More important than having a precise definition is to show the importance of this dimension and strive to produce people-centred, actionable policy plans.

Among initiatives expected to be proposed by the Commission, an upcoming action plan to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights can be a crucial tool to strengthen just and fair transition governance in the EU.. Another opportunity is the expected revision of the Governance Regulation.