

Summary of the Reform Institute's webinar “Leaving No One Behind? Just Transition aspects in the NECPs revision”

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On June 27, 2024, the Reform Institute held a webinar to discuss the results of its work on a methodological framework for evaluating drafts of updated National Energy and Climate Plans (NECP) with a focus on just transition, which was created in collaboration with ECCO, BlueLink Foundation and Ecologic. In addition, the purpose of the webinar was to present the results of the work and share experiences and insights from the four countries included in the project and beyond.

In the first part of the meeting, Reform Institute analyst Aneta Stefańczyk presented the methodology adopted in performing the analysis, including the scoring system and the criteria that were taken into account, and presented various aspects of the analysis, among which were ambitions and goals, support for local businesses and communities, as well as energy and transport poverty.

Following this, Reform Institute analyst Maria Niewiła-Rej presented the results of an assessment of four NECPs - Polish, Bulgarian, Italian and German. Although the results were far from satisfactory, all the countries discussed are on track to improve their NECPs. Some issues, however, require particular improvement. Remarkably, despite the social and economic differences, the Member States share similar problems on issues related to planning the just transition. What is missing from the drafts of the updated NECPs is a focus on regional issues, particularly the problems faced by territories identified as most vulnerable in the transition. In addition, the documents do not give sufficient attention to the most vulnerable individuals and households. The final versions of the NECPs should discuss to a greater extent policies and measures to address energy and transportation poverty, the impacts of migration and ageing in the transition regions and promote gender equality and opportunities for career transition.

In the next part of the webinar, Polina Slavcheva from the BlueLink Foundation discussed her thoughts on the Bulgarian NECP. One aspect that was mentioned is Bulgaria's growing ambitions. Despite this, there is a noticeable continued lack of concrete plans, particularly when it comes to RES deployment or phasing out coal. It is worth mentioning that the recently published new version of the Bulgarian NECP was a definite improvement over the previous one and took into account some of the comments developed during the project.

ECCO's Giulia Colafrancesco provided an Italian perspective, which showed that the Italian NECP still needs significant improvement, and the final version does not promise to be revolutionary. Despite the efforts of many involved parties, Italy is still relatively far from developing NECP that sufficiently addresses issues of just transition.

At the end of the panel portion of the webinar, the CEO of Reform Institute Aleksander Sniegocki commented on the Polish NECP. One of the main problems in the Polish case is the fundamental gap in the whole process: the lack of definition of transition goals. Poland is experiencing

significant delays in the preparation of the plan, and in addition, the plan itself is not complete - it only contains a baseline scenario. For these reasons, the analysis of the Polish NECP is problematic - it is impossible to assess the socio-economic impact of an ambitious scenario if such a scenario has not yet been published.

In the final part of the event, the panellists gave the floor to all webinar participants, who had the opportunity to comment on the results of the analysis and share their experiences and observations on the process of preparing national plans. Attention was drawn to the fact that in other countries, such as Estonia or Hungary, the incorporation of the just transition objectives into the NECPs does not look good either, which was also noted by the European Commission. Issues such as the need to take individual regions into account in dialogue and consultation, which is one of the weaknesses in current processes, or the important role of including the perspective of those involved in the fight against poverty and social exclusion on a daily basis, were also highlighted.