

Work Package 6

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An aerial photograph of a city, likely Vilnius, showing a dense green park in the foreground and modern buildings in the background under a clear sky.

Bridging multi-level climate governance gaps: briefing on EU-level workshops

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Introduction

Work Package 6 of the EUCityCalc project is focused on multi-level governance, specifically seeking to better align climate policy-making between EU, national and local levels of government, including by: i) assessing enabling and constraining factors for local governments to accelerate the climate transition¹; ii) developing a capacity-building toolkit on the EU Governance Regulation,² along with informative videos³; iii) developing overall policy recommendations that identify gaps in the Governance Regulation.⁴

EUCityCalc partners have thus been active in engaging with diverse stakeholders, including national and EU policymakers, to promote the strengths and needs of local authorities, in particular when it comes to strengthening links to typically top-down EU and national policies.

To this end, as mentioned above, EUCityCalc partners developed a comprehensive set of recommendations to urgently revise the EU Governance Regulation by calling on the European Commission and related EU institutions and committees in the policymaking process to significantly strengthen:

1. **enforcement frameworks** granting the European Commission the mandate to: reject incomplete or unambitious NECPs; oblige Member States to address gaps, clarify information, or increase the ambition of their NECPs; and apply penalties or other corrective measures (e.g. if Member States don't submit NECPs and progress reports on time, or fail to uphold Articles 10 and 11 of the Governance), and more;
2. **integrated reporting** by Member States in their NECPs and related progress reports about the commitments, data, and measures of cities and local authorities (e.g. SECAPs, Climate City Contract, Local Green Deals, EUCityCalc) as well as the support and

¹ EUCityCalc (30 June 2023), “National and EU factors affecting EUCityCalc pilot cities’ climate transition”, available directly via https://europeancitycalculator.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/WP6_National-and-EU-factors-affecting-pilot-cities-climate-transition.pdf

² EUCityCalc (31 October 2023), “Tracking EU climate policy and engaging with policymakers: a toolkit for cities to unlock climate action”, available directly via https://europeancitycalculator.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Tracking-EU-climate-policy-and-engaging-with-policymakers-a-toolkit-for-cities-to-unlock-climate-action_Deliverable-6.2_EUCityCalc.pdf

³ <https://europeancitycalculator.eu/2024/07/10/eucitycalc-recommendations-to-strengthen-the-role-of-local-authorities/>; ; <https://europeancitycalculator.eu/2024/04/02/taking-stock-of-necps-a-need-to-revise-eu-climate-law-and-empower-cities/>; ; <https://europeancitycalculator.eu/2023/04/27/necps-an-opportunity-for-cities-to-influence-national-climate-policies/>; ; <https://europeancitycalculator.eu/2024/04/02/taking-stock-of-necps-a-need-to-revise-eu-climate-law-and-empower-cities/>; ;

⁴ EUCityCalc (21 May 2024), “Revising the EU Governance Regulation for enhanced local and national climate action: recommendations from EUCityCalc”, available directly via https://europeancitycalculator.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Final_Overall-policy-recommendations_Deliverable-6.6_EUCityCalc.pdf

resources provided by national and EU governments to support local implementation, and more;

3. **multi-level climate and energy dialogues** for enhanced policy coordination, including by making these dialogues permanent and framing clear minimum requirements on the frequency of meetings, diverse representation, mandate of work, and more;
4. **public participation requirements** for enhanced environmental democracy by requiring Member States to elaborate engagement strategies and uphold clear minimum timeframes for engagement and reflecting the public's inputs, and more.

EUCityCalc partners have been actively promoting these recommendations in discussions with stakeholders and policymakers, including during two EU-level workshops held in May and June 2024. A summary of EUCityCalc's participation in these two workshops is presented in this briefing.

Workshop during the Committee of the Regions special session

Energy Cities participated in a special workshop session of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) on 29 May 2024 in Brussels (Belgium), in the context of the Green Deal Going Local Initiative. In this session, among other things, the report “Regions and cities reshaping the European Green Deal 2.0” was launched, which details 29 key recommendations for the EU’s next legislative mandate.⁵

During the session, Energy Cities engaged several times, including by presenting the EUCityCalc project and its recommendations on the urgent need to revise the EU Governance Regulation.⁶ The Committee of the Regions has similarly flagged problems that EUCityCalc found regarding the Governance Regulation, and has also called for its revision in the past.⁷

The session featured a range of key policymakers and senior figures, including Maroš Šefčovič, European Commission Executive Vice-President for European Green Deal, Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight, Rafał Trzaskowski, Mayor of Warsaw and chair of the the CoR’s ENVE Commission and Green Deal Going Local working group, and Kata Tüttö, Deputy Mayor of Budapest and vice-chair of the CoR’s ENVE Commission. In all, over 100 participants attended the session, with 50 attendees representing local authorities, and most of the remaining attendees representing various EU institutions.

Overall, the workshop session thus represented a key forum in which to present the EUCityCalc project and its recommendations to revise the Governance Regulation directly to key EU-level policy- and decision-makers.

⁵ For a press release of the session, see: <https://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/green-deal-2-0-regions-and-cities.aspx>

⁶ EUCityCalc (21 May 2024), “Revising the EU Governance Regulation for enhanced local and national climate action: recommendations from EUCityCalc”, available directly via https://europeancitycalculator.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Final_Overall-policy-recommendations_Deliverable-6.6_EUCityCalc.pdf

⁷ European Committee of the Regions (30 November 2023), “Towards a multilevel Green Deal governance: the revision of the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action regulation”, <https://cor.europa.eu/en/our-work/Pages/OpinionTimeline.aspx?opId=CDR-903-2023>

Workshop during Energy Cities 2024 Annual Forum

EUCityCalc hosted a policy workshop on 26 June 2024 entitled “Empowering local authorities in national and EU climate policymaking”, during Energy Cities’ 2024 Annual Forum, “Grafting Cities”, held in Valencia (Spain).⁸

The agenda for the workshop was as follows:

- ◆ Introduction to the EUCityCalc project – Bénédicte Weber (Energy Cities)
- ◆ EU Governance Regulation + cities & the NECP update process – Jonathan Crook (CMW)
- ◆ Portugal: local experience & recommendations – Orlando Paraiba (Energy and Environment Agency of Arrábida - ENA)
- ◆ Czechia: local experience & recommendations – Jaroslav Klusák (Association of Local Energy Managers - SEMMO)
- ◆ Latvia: local experience and recommendations – Māra Reča (Riga Energy Agency - REA)
- ◆ Recommendations to revise the Governance Regulation – Jonathan Crook
- ◆ Q&A

The one-hour and fifteen-minute workshop therefore focused on takeaways from the EUCityCalc project regarding coordination between the local and national levels of government in the context of the EU’s Governance Regulation. The workshop included a deep-dive into on-the-ground experiences, with EUCityCalc partners ENA, SEMMO and Riga Energy Agency sharing their practical lessons respectively in Portugal, Czechia, and Latvia, about engaging with their governments and sharing their recommendations for improved co-ordination for climate policymaking. Following this, the session concluded by presenting EUCityCalc’s recommendations to urgently revise the EU’s Governance Regulation, which are further detailed

⁸ For more information on Energy Cities’ 2024 annual forum, see here: <https://energy-cities.eu/event/annual-forum-of-energy-cities/>

in our standalone policy briefing entitled “Revising the EU Governance Regulation for enhanced local and national climate action: recommendations from EUCityCalc”.⁹

The policy workshop featured 23 participants representing policy officials, city representatives and other key local-level stakeholders, in addition to several EUCityCalc partners. Both during and following the presentations, there was time for questions from the audience. ENA, SEMMO, and REAN were commended for their presentations and were asked questions to seek further insight into their recommendations for their national government as well as to request additional information about their local context and how they overcame barriers to engaging with their national government. For example, one audience member asked how granular national-level climate policymaking should be, given that each region and municipality operates in a different context and that generalised approaches may not always be well adapted. Another audience member agreed with the EUCityCalc recommendations to revise the Governance Regulation, while suggesting a tweak to the recommendations to consider reward-oriented incentives for compliance with the Governance Regulation in addition to penalties.

Overall, it was a stimulating discussion on multi-level governance and the key role of local authorities to achieve wider climate targets and even to enhance the ambition, provided there is more careful consideration and tailored support for local-level needs. It was positive to hear support for the project’s EU-level recommendations from participants as well as to receive encouragement and suggestions from them aiming to ensure our recommendations are well received by the European Commission and other key EU institutions and policymakers so that the Governance Regulation can be revised in a manner that makes it fit-for-purpose.

⁹ EUCityCalc (21 May 2024), “Revising the EU Governance Regulation for enhanced local and national climate action: recommendations from EUCityCalc”, available directly via https://europeancitycalculator.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Final_Overall-policy-recommendations_Deliverable-6.6_EUCityCalc.pdf