

LONG-TERM CLIMATE PLANNING IN CENTRAL EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES



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INTRODUCTION

According to the Governance Regulation, the EU Member States are required to prepare national long-term strategies (nLTS) to present their climate and energy transition pathway with a perspective of at least 30 years. They were obliged to submit their nLTS to the European Commission by 1 January 2020. The submitted documents vary widely, making it challenging to compare and assess them according to a common methodology. In addition, the Bulgarian, Polish and Romanian nLTSs are still missing, and the Slovak and Czech strategies are (only partly) updated versions of already existing documents.

In September 2021, Climate Action Network Europe [published](#) a detailed assessment of national long-term strategies in seven European countries – Czechia, Hungary, Estonia, Slovenia, Croatia, Spain and Portugal¹ – as well as the Poland's Energy Policy by 2040. The assessment analysed the extent to which the visions, policies and measures included in these documents would help the EU to achieve climate neutrality by 2040, as required to achieve the 1.5°C objective of the Paris Agreement. This briefing builds on these country-specific assessments and highlights best practices from six Central Eastern European Member States (Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia). It also looks into regional synergies, drawing collective recommendations.

According to the last IPCC Report², regardless of future levels of global warming, temperatures will rise across all of Europe at a rate exceeding global mean temperature changes. The IPCC also foresees increases in hydrological, agricultural and ecological droughts at mid-century warming levels of 2°C or above, regardless of the greenhouse gas emissions scenario.

Central Eastern Europe will be severely hit by the climate crisis. If temperature increases stay on the current trajectory and the Paris Agreement goals are not met, the CEE region will be increasingly exposed to extreme weather events such as floods and droughts, which, combined with the region's low adaptation capacity, makes these countries more vulnerable than other European countries. According to the Climate Economics Index, which assesses how climate risks will affect countries' economies and ranks their overall climate resilience³, CEE economies will be significantly affected. Among 48 countries analysed around the world, Hungary ranks 21st, Poland 32nd and Czechia 33rd. Among European countries, Poland and Czechia rank the lowest.

In this context, it is especially crucial for Central Eastern European countries to address long-term climate planning in an ambitious and comprehensive way. Based on the best practices and recommendations highlighted in this document, its authors make the following recommendations for the national long-term strategies of Central and Eastern European countries:

- Include a climate neutrality date which is no later than the EU climate neutrality date under the EU Climate Law to ensure policy coherence and a longer-term vision for economic, environmental and societal transition;
- Include analyses and trajectories of the economic transformation in a comprehensive way to address interlinkages among particular sectors and policies, and to make use of potential synergies;
- Ensure public dialogue and support for the longer-term transition vision.

1 <https://unify.caneurope.org/2021/09/30/forget-me-not-national-strategies-to-reach-climate-neutrality-are-still-missing/>

2 https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/factsheets/IPCC_AR6_WGI_Regional_Fact_Sheet_Europe.pdf

3 <https://www.swissre.com/institute/research/topics-and-risk-dialogues/climate-and-natural-catastrophe-risk/expertise-publication-economics-of-climate-change.html>

Long-term strategies
received by the EC (as of 30
September 2021)

- nLTS submitted to the EC
- no nLTS submitted to the EC



BEST PRACTICES IN CENTRAL EASTERN EUROPEAN NATIONAL LONG-TERM CLIMATE STRATEGIES

The development and implementation of nLTS have very different levels of ambition, political ownership and public participation among European countries. Despite of all the gaps and shortages of the national LTS documents in the CEE region⁴, they contain some good practices and offer lessons learnt from their drafting processes that could potentially be transferable to other countries to enhance the ambition and quality of their strategies while they are being drafted or revised.

Despite a number of shortcomings in the **Slovenian** long-term strategy, (defined in more detail below), setting a goal to reach climate neutrality by 2050 and including sectoral long-term targets are important highlights of the document. It is also positive that the strategy recognises the need to improve both the organisation of the implementation of climate policy, and governance structures. To achieve this, the document envisages the establishment of a governmental body in charge of coordinating Slovenian climate policy. To support the government in monitoring and formulating climate policy, the strategy also envisages the establishment of an independent scientific-expert council.

4 <https://caneurope.org/content/uploads/2021/10/NLTS-REPORT-1.pdf>

Slovenia aims to achieve an 80-90% reduction in emissions by 2050 compared to 2005. In the land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector, the goal is to achieve a net sink of at least -2,500 kt CO₂ eq by 2050. However, the Slovenian LTS takes the unambitious targets contained in the country's National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) for 2030, and proposes very steep emission reduction targets from 2030 onwards. In addition, it fails to provide concrete sectoral measures after 2030. Furthermore, it relies heavily on carbon sinks which are expected to contribute 10-20% of the climate neutrality target, without taking into account the current poor condition of Slovenia's forests and the expected changes in forest structure due to climate change. These limitations call into question Slovenia's ability to achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

The **Slovak** nLTS also indicates climate neutrality by 2050 as an overall LTS goal. The strategy was developed based on the World Bank's Low-Carbon Growth Study for Slovakia which means its projected greenhouse gas emissions reduction is set at only -80% compared to 1990 levels. The document analyses the next 10 years in depth. It clearly states the importance of achieving the 2030 climate and energy targets. In parallel, however, the 2030 climate and energy targets as defined in the Slovak NECP (and reflected in the nLTS) are not ambitious enough. Additionally, the vision for 2040-50 is the long-term strategy.

The document mentions a role for a coordinating and consultative advisory body to the Government of the Slovak Republic: "The Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for the European Green Deal and Low-Carbon Transformation". The Slovak Ministry of the Environment has established a government council on the European Green Deal which includes representatives from civil society organisations. However, its first meeting took place in April and no further meetings have been held since, despite its role being linked with EU climate policies. The CSOs repeatedly called for another meeting to discuss official positions on the "Fit for 55" package, but no meeting was organised during this important phase. They are concerned that it is yet another public relations move by the Slovak government to formally show "engagement" on key climate policies.

The strategy also acknowledges that a low-carbon transformation will on the one hand bring new additional costs, but also environmental, economic and health benefits. There are however significant information gaps in the document: There are no specific targets or trajectories for renewable energy and energy efficiency beyond 2030, and the document frequently refers to the increase in the use of biomass to boost renewable energy production, which might be quite problematic if its sustainability is not ensured. The nLTS also foresees the development of nuclear power.

The **Hungarian** nLTS sets the target of reaching climate neutrality by 2050 and provides a detailed cost-benefit comparison of two climate action scenarios (early action or late action) compared to no action (business as usual). Relying strongly on the recommendations of the National Bank of Hungary, the document provides a detailed list of recommended financing tools and schemes for climate action, including the introduction of green guarantee and risk funds, green bonds and mortgage loans.

It proposes incentives to green financing sector portfolios, establishes a sustainable stock market and a national green guarantee institute, and introduces green budgeting and reporting. It also proposes the launch of a domestic voluntary carbon-offsetting market. This would be worth supplementing with the introduction of a green money substitute that can be exchanged for goods and services on a green market, including by relying on interest-free loans drawn from a revolving fund.

Interestingly, the nLTS lists energy communities among financing tools. This has the additional benefit of not burdening the retail grid with the volatility of local renewable energy production, while encouraging the establishment of decentralised prosumer networks.

The **Estonian** national long-term strategy - General Principles of Climate Policy until 2050 - was adopted by the Estonian Parliament in April 2017. The document outlines 33 policy guidelines with a vision that relies on a competitive economy with low carbon dioxide emissions. The strategy describes targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050 in comparison to 1990 levels, making it quite outdated.

There are two positive aspects of the Estonian nLTS:

Firstly, it was prepared through a long process of deliberation. From March 2015 to March 2016, stakeholders were involved in discussions in five dedicated working-groups: energy and industry, transport, agriculture, forestry and waste. Altogether 80 stakeholder groups were involved including experts, civil society organisations, enterprises and scientists.

Secondly, the strategy covers a relatively large scope of policy areas related to climate policy and the public consultation process enabled stakeholders to debate and deliberate on which changes and objectives are important in different sectors. Still, the overall content of the Estonian nLTS lacks the specific steps needed and misses several opportunities to accelerate the transition of the country's economy and energy systems. In the long run, the strategy to reach climate neutrality relies too much on loopholes, vague targets, and unclear trajectories which will allow for political inconsistencies. Environmental organisations agree that the strategy lacks ambition as it fails to drive climate policy forward and it lags behind the revised EU target to reach climate neutrality by 2050. They recommend a revision of the document, and an acceleration of the transition by drawing up a climate neutrality target for 2035 in order to stay in line with the 1.5°C goal.

In **Czechia**, the country's Low Carbon Development Strategy, developed under the EU's Monitoring Mechanism Regulation, was drafted in 2017 through a constructive participative process that allowed different stakeholders to contribute. The result was a comprehensive document that included a number of important policy proposals and was capable of guiding long-term climate policy planning. This in itself can be considered good practice.

However, this document has not been updated since the Governance Regulation entered into force. It was submitted to the Commission in 2020 as the Czech nLTS without any public consultation. As a result, the current Czech nLTS does not reflect the EU's new climate targets. Moreover, as was already clear by 2020, the vast majority of the policy proposals and recommendations included in the document have not been implemented in practice, so the strategy remained little more than words on paper.

Poland does not have an nLTS, in spite of the fact that the country formally started to work on it before 1 January 2020. Unfortunately, any preparation work is happening behind closed doors and public participation is extremely limited. This is unusual for Poland since the government has experience in holding public consultations in the form of public hearings, which attract a lot of stakeholders. Such hearings were held in 2021 for all planned national European Funds Programmes and the Partnership Agreement. The nLTS should undergo the same consultation process, especially since the government has recently started a consultation on The Concept for National Development up to 2050.

Given that the Polish LTS is delayed, a potential new document covering the period up to 2050 should propose more ambitious climate targets than Poland's current climate policy documents.

REGIONAL SYNERGIES IN NATIONAL LTS IN CEE COUNTRIES

There are not many regional links identified in the nLTS documents, despite the fact that they often include policies and measures that could potentially affect other (CEE) countries (such as energy infrastructures). It is worth mentioning, however, that the national processes of drafting the long-term climate planning documents, and public debates that accompany them, can also have an indirect influence on developments in the region. For example, national coal phase-out date debates are closely followed across different countries in the region. One country's lack of ambition is often used by others as an excuse not to choose an earlier coal phase-out date.

Among the key principles of national climate policy, the **Hungarian** nLTS lists the need to assure coherence among regional policies, acknowledging that responses must be valid for the whole of the Carpathian Basin, taking into account the nature of the single ecosystem. It notes that Hungary and Visegrad countries plan to deepen their cooperation on climate change and environmental challenges. The EU's Directive 2001/42/EC on strategic environmental assessments (SEA) requires neighbouring countries to be involved in the nLTS's SEA, however, no information is available on whether or not this took place.

There are no regional links identified in the **Slovenian** nLTS document. This is highly problematic as the document includes a decision on the long-term use of nuclear energy in Slovenia and the beginning of procedures for planning an investment in Unit 2 of the Krško nuclear power plant. This has been done without public consultation and without a strategic environmental impact assessment. Furthermore, no cross-border impact assessment was made for the second reactor despite the fact that Slovenia is legally bound to provide this analysis by the Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment.

The **Czech** nLTS does not include any explicit regional considerations, risks or potential for increased collaboration, which is a missed opportunity. Any CEE regional overlaps can therefore only be identified post hoc. Analysis of the policy proposals confirms the document's heavy focus on domestic matters. The only matters with clear cross-border potential include plans to build new nuclear reactors and intentions to (better) finance international climate protection, also as part of development cooperation.

Poland has, so far, not proposed a model to coordinate its climate efforts with the wider region.

RECOMMENDATIONS: MAKING LONG-TERM CLIMATE PLANNING WORK FOR CLIMATE AMBITION IN CEE

The national long-term strategies should become a useful and effective tool for the EU Member States to plan their economic and societal transition towards climate neutrality in a comprehensive and participative way. They can also provide the European Commission with an overview to monitor the ambition gap at the EU level and properly steer climate policies and developments across Europe. In order to achieve this, both the content and processes national authorities use to develop and implement the national long-term strategies should be assessed.

1. Policy

NLTS documents must take the latest scientific advice and EU policy developments into account. This will allow them to become effective planning and monitoring tools for a cross-sectoral transition to a climate neutral and socially just economy in Member States. To ensure such a process, the European Commission and Member States should put the following measures in place⁵:

- Clear guidance from the European Commission concerning the assessment methodology and timeline.
 - ▶ The revision of NECPs in 2023 - 2024 should be used as an opportunity to revise and / or finalise the national long-term strategies in order to implement the new climate and energy targets. This opportunity could also be used to make the nLTS documents consistent with each other at national level (an integrated and comprehensive monitoring system should be launched);
 - ▶ The European Commission should request the still missing nLTSs, assess the collective and national ambition gaps and give recommendations. Based on these recommendations, the Member States should revise and improve their nLTSs in order to increase their climate ambition, to at least the binding EU level;
 - ▶ The Commission should also update the NECP and nLTS templates to reflect the latest science and developments in the EU climate and energy policies.
- Member States should see the nLTS as a much-needed tool to prepare their climate and energy transition for the next 30 years. This would address all economic sectors and create a just societal transformation with all the necessary interlinkages and synergies. For this process, a broad participative dialogue is needed. These documents should be based on the latest available science, and address current developments in the implementation of climate policy, the EU's climate and energy targets both for 2030 and 2050, other national and sectoral plans and policies (NECPs, NRRPs etc.)

2. Process - Participation

In the **Czech** case, linking the intended update of the nLTS (which should be published by 2023) to the lively and ongoing coal phase-out debate is a reasonable way forward. In any case, the update needs to be done urgently and in an open process that allows civil society and other stakeholders to be heard and their suggestions to be reflected in the document. Certainly, the point of departure should be to align the document with

⁵ For details check: <https://caneurope.org/content/uploads/2021/10/NLTS-REPORT-1.pdf>

the 2050 climate neutrality target, and also use the opportunity to re-frame this endeavour as an opportunity rather than a constraint or even a threat.

While the planning and consultation process on the **Hungarian** nLTS was rather opaque and unpredictable due to the lack of a clear public timeline, the final Strategy seems to have incorporated several considerations and aspects raised by various stakeholders during the consultation. For instance, it acknowledged the need to raise the ambition of climate action, even if it only goes a bit beyond the NECP. In addition, the final strategy proposes a set of tools for awareness-raising, creating a just transition and financing which are rather progressive. The key now is the implementation, the safeguards for which are lacking: The nLTS is not a legally binding document and it does not have a monitoring or control system. Hungary's climate law is also missing a monitoring system. The nLTS should also strongly favour the Early Action scenario. A next step at policy level, with a view to the revision of the nLTS, would be the full phase-out of fossil fuels.

During the public consultation on the programming of the national part of EU funds in **Poland**, there was a well-established process of public hearings and 'reverse' public hearings. During a public hearing, NGOs and citizens could make pleas or give opinions about the document. During a 'reverse' public hearing the government explains how they used the opinions and included the pleas into the document. Written consultations take place alongside the hearings. A similar public participation process should apply to designing Poland's decarbonisation pathways in its forthcoming nLTS.

In **Estonia**, environmental civil society organisations (CSOs) have been actively pushing for a just transition by bringing together stakeholders in the Ida-Virumaa oil-shale region. CSOs initiated workshops and seminars to encourage local people and enterprises to search for new opportunities for the region. Regional authorities and ministries have cooperated with CSOs and are now taking the lead in the process by bringing stakeholders together in more formal consultations on the development of the Territorial Just Transition Plan. Different new CSO-led initiatives, such as the co-creation of a Green Plan for the region and regional youth climate assembly have also helped engage communities in the dialogue about future choices and developments in the region.

An online consultation on the preparation of **Slovenia's** climate strategy was published at the beginning of November 2019. More than 400 comments were submitted during the consultation. Additionally, two public presentations took place to allow further consultation. Prior to the development of the strategy, a number of workshops with various stakeholders were held as part of the LIFE Climate Path 2050 project to prepare analytical bases for the climate strategy. Although several consultations, workshops and demonstration events took place during the preparation of the long-term strategy, public involvement was merely a box ticking exercise. Civil society organisations did not receive any response to the comments made, and in the end, the document was changed substantially by the Government, including a political decision on the long-term use of nuclear energy in Slovenia.

A coal-phase out date has not been included in the nLTS. This date will be set in the coal-exit strategy which should be adopted by the end of 2021. Due to the lack of ambition of the 2030 targets, the Slovenian nLTS will have to be revised in accordance with the new "Fit for 55" targets while ensuring a meaningful public participation process.

LOOKING AHEAD: INCREASING THE AMBITION OF THE NLTS AND ENHANCING THE IMPORTANCE OF LONG-TERM CLIMATE PLANNING IN CEE

The European Commission published its assessment of the 20 submitted nLTSs in October 2021 as a part of the Climate Action Progress Report⁶. Given that seven strategies are still missing, it is impossible to assess the ambition gap at the overall EU level. In addition, some of the submitted documents do not include the climate neutrality target. Generally, a more detailed analysis of particular policies would be needed to make the nLTS a useful tool to guide economic and societal transformation. In the context of the revision of the EU's climate and energy legislation under the "Fit for 55" package, the European Commission "encourages the Member States to consider updating and, where possible, to increase the ambition of their national long-term strategies".

The Central Eastern European NGOs will be closely monitoring the progress of their governments in revising and updating the national long-term strategies in line with the climate neutrality objective, and providing recommendations for ambitious climate action policies and measures. There will be an important moment for advocacy in the run up to and during the revision of the National Energy and Climate Plans (2023), as well as during the process of revising the climate and energy targets in accordance with the "Fit for 55" package.

The **Czech** NGOs will strive to ensure that the policy proposals in the updated nLTS text are coupled with tools allowing for their implementation. With the **Hungarian** nLTS just approved (in September 2021), the next entry point for pushing for increased ambition in the nLTS will be the design of financing schemes for climate action (mainly through various European Union funds). In addition, MTVSZ, the Hungarian project partner, provided a thorough assessment of the approved nLTS to the Hungarian government in December 2021. This assessment should raise awareness among both the government and the general public of the need to further enhance Hungary's climate ambition when designing future climate action programmes which prioritise energy efficiency and decentralised, renewables-based energy production and consumption initiatives.

Poland is currently starting to prepare the Country Development Concept until 2050 and the Polish nLTS is expected to be published and opened for consultation soon. These processes should offer the possibility to align different sectoral policies under the common framework of climate ambition. There is a need to put climate issues at the heart of these documents. Because the nLTS document is late, the Country Development Concept could include decarbonisation pathways up to 2050 and meet the criteria to become Poland's nLTS.

As described in this briefing, national strategies and planning processes in CEE tend to focus on short-term policies and actions, rather than long-term ones, which can lead to a postponement of all necessary climate action. This must change if we are to listen to the latest available science. Not all countries in the region have prepared their national long-term strategies yet; these countries should design ambitious national long-term strategies to achieve the climate and energy targets. These strategies would give stakeholders a clear plan for the transition of our economies and societies. These documents should be homogenous with other strategic documents at national level and be developed in a participative process that would give people a sense of ownership and shared understanding of the opportunities that will be created by the EU's transition to climate neutrality.

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/clima/system/files/2021-11/policy_strategies_progress_com_2021_960_en.pdf

ANNEX: METHODOLOGY

This document is developed by regional NGOs based on publicly available national long-term Strategies, the European Commission's assessment of the nLTSs and the results of public consultations. It is based on regional workshops and webinars where all stakeholders had the chance to come together, discuss the role of long-term climate planning, challenges and opportunities as well as provide recommendations for how to increase climate ambition in CEE. Please see the recommendations from these events under "Building capacity for multi-stakeholder cooperation to contribute to long-term climate planning in Visegrad 4+2" EUKI and LIFE UNIFY projects below:

- A. Central European Stakeholders Workshop on "Participatory processes in development and implementation of climate and energy strategies", organised by Focus, Slovenia, September 2020.
- **One of the main barriers to successful public participation is a lack of know-how.** Capacity building is crucial for governments to make public participation successful and not just a box ticking exercise.
 - **Governments should strive to include citizens** and not just NGOs in participatory processes.
 - **It is important that someone is designated to lead** the participatory process.
 - **All the stakeholders should be included from the beginning of the participatory processes.**
 - **Clear language and participatory tools are crucial to successful participatory processes.** It is important to develop online tools and use clear language in order to include citizens in the process.
- B. Multi-Stakeholder Online Workshop on "Making Climate Action Happen", organised by MTVSZ, Hungary, December 2020⁷

Discussions were based on three EU funds that can be used for climate action: Territorial Just Transition Plans, Recovery and Resilience Plans and Cohesion Policy Programmes. The following key opportunities and recommendations were identified:

- a) Territorial Just Transition Plans:
- Connect potential investors to relevant local social groups and communities to assist in re-training and re-skilling for future employment.
 - Assist local and regional governments in raising supplementary funding for the just transition, in particular for community-oriented programmes.
 - Seize the opportunity to develop renewable energy sources as their cost falls and competitiveness rises.
 - Cooperate with international NGOs as they can provide useful advocacy and awareness-raising tools such as [CEE Bankwatch's participatory Just Transition guidebook](#).

⁷ Full documentation of the conference: <https://mtvsz.hu/en/news/2020/12/making-climate-action-happen-workshop-4dec2020>

b) Recovery and Resilience Plans:

- Seize the opportunity created by strong local interest and try to channel it to decision-makers. Identify and advocate for opportunities for local and regional stakeholders to get involved in recovery planning.
- Draft “shadow” sector-specific chapters (components) for the RRP – a template is available.
- Address the European Commission with proposed content of RRP directly.
- Demand a Strategic Environmental Assessment for Recovery and Resilience Plans and use it to integrate climate considerations in the Plans.

c) Cohesion Policy Programmes:

- Capacity building for participation at the EU, national and local level is needed to turn legal requirements (e.g. the European Code of Conduct on Partnership etc.) into reality.
- The Renovation Wave⁸ sets a framework for the urgent refurbishment of the building stock with the potential to considerably enhance energy efficiency.
- Criteria on climate proofing can/should be advocated for through the Triologue negotiations on Cohesion Policy regulations including the Taxonomy⁹.
- Advocate for a meaningful application of the 30% earmarking of Cohesion Policy funds for climate action.

C. CEE Stakeholders Workshop on “Cultivating Just Transition in Central and Eastern Europe”, organised by CDE, Czechia, May 2021¹⁰.

- **The transition narrative provides a framework to navigate a complex but necessary change** towards a better future brought by the decarbonisation process in the fossil fuels-intensive regions.
- **Public engagement and participation of all stakeholders is needed** in order for the transition to be accepted, supported and implemented by locals.
- **Simple and inclusive communication about the just transition published by local media** can ensure the alignment of the process to the respective local realities.
- **Communication about the just transition should not focus on energy alone.** It should concentrate on the future prospects for locals in the coal-intensive regions.
- **Making the transition work for people means concentrating on the needs of locals**, especially those most influenced by and most vulnerable to the transition.
- **Decarbonisation is an urgent matter, requiring ambition and commitment** in order to make the just energy transition a reality.
- **Role models from other countries might accelerate the needed changes in less ambitious regions.**

D. Webinar on “How to make CAP Strategy Plans deliver climate ambition in Central Eastern Europe”, organised by CAN Europe, September 2021

- Given that the post-2022 CAP fails to adequately accelerate emissions reductions in the agriculture sector, Member States have a crucial role in increasing the climate ambition of their agricultural policies through well designed national Strategic Plans. Member States should ensure they finalise and deliver their Strategic Plans to the European Commission by the end of 2021 to make sure they deliver on climate objectives;
- The new CAP will establish a general legal framework under which national strategies can be developed in each Member State. This will give them a lot of flexibility. Member States should

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/energy-efficiency/energy-efficient-buildings/renovation-wave_en

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/banking-and-finance/sustainable-finance/eu-taxonomy-sustainable-activities_en

¹⁰ Full report from the workshop: <https://unify.caneurope.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/07/policy-recommendations-cultivating-just-in-cee.pdf>

identify specific measures that address particular problems. National governments should use this framework as a starting point and go beyond the requirements to secure climate ambition at the overall EU level.

- NGOs should demand stronger links between measures proposed in the Strategic Plans and the European Green Deal's objectives.
- CAP Strategic Plans should be used by national governments as a tool to design transformation pathways for the agricultural sector towards climate neutrality. This process requires a broad multi-stakeholder dialogue and implementing measures to increase their level of climate awareness and explain the planned solutions under the CAP to increase understanding of environmental goals among farmers.
- The European Commission will be assessing the Strategic Plans in the first half of 2022. This approval mechanism is a new approach that will enable the CAP to take the EU's new climate targets into account. It will also allow synergies to be created with different policies since CAP plans need to be consistent with legislation.

- E. Webinar on "How to lower CO₂ emissions from road transport in CEE countries", organised by ISD, Poland, September 2021¹¹

Tackling emissions in the transport sector is the biggest issue CEE countries face. In all countries, transport emissions have been rising for years at a faster rate than in the rest of the European Union. High transport emissions are linked to the large number of old cars with low environmental standards that are imported into CEE countries from Western Europe. This is accompanied by low sales of new cars, the fast development of road networks, the slow modernisation of the existing railway network and the lack of new railway links, especially between CEE countries. Furthermore, public transport networks remain underdeveloped, especially outside of the biggest cities of the region. Political solutions to these problems are not easy to introduce because CEE societies are very sensitive to the issues of justice and freedom. Many of the proposed solutions will touch upon the freedom to use a private car, or they will raise the costs of its ownership. There is a need to justify the choice of the following proposed measures to reduce road transport emissions:

- Higher taxation on the ownership of older cars;
- Clean Transport Zones in the biggest cities;
- Support for the purchase of new cars with higher environmental standards;
- Higher financial support for public transport outside the biggest cities.

¹¹ Recording of the webinar: <https://chronmyklimat.pl/debaty/niskoemisjny-transport-w-cee/1343-obejrzyj-zapis-z-debaty-niskoemisjny-transport-w-cee>

