Making the grade?
A review of eight national energy and climate plans in central and eastern Europe

ROMANIA
Lacking coherence and willingness to enforce

The draft NECP was developed by the Ministry of Energy and published on 29 November 2018 for public consultation, with only ten days made available for comments. However the Romanian government recently stated that “due to the complexity of this plan […] and because many interested parties voiced their interest in having more time available for analysis and suggestions,” it would reopen the consultation on the plan, a positive development in terms of public participation.

In preparation of the NECP, a task force was established in 2017 by the government, led by representatives of different ministries and from the main public energy industries. The Ministry of Energy said that it would organise local and regional consultations after finalising the first version of the NECP, and that the taskforce would then report on the comments and suggestions it received and revise the draft accordingly. It is unclear whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment would be carried out, but there is hope that such a process could follow the extended period for public participation.

Level of ambition

In general, the plan lacks coherence in setting up measures that will help the country reach its targets. The NECP sets a 2030 target for GHG emission reduction at a level of 43.9 per cent in sectors covered by the EU-ETS, and a 2 per cent target for non-ETS emissions. This goal is higher than the one established at the European level, but measures to attain this objective are only inventoried and do not provide a clear perspective of how these actions are complemented by others from different sectors.

According to projections in the draft NECP, Romania will achieve by 2030 a share of renewable energy in the gross final consumption of only 27.9 per cent, well below the European target of 32 per cent. Despite its enormous potential – with a share of 25 per cent RES already achieved in 2016 – and the fact that the performance of wind and solar technologies increases and their costs decrease, the target shows the authorities’ lack of vision and their inability commit to an ambitious energy transition.

In order to meet European and international climate objectives, coal must be phased-out of energy generation before 2030. But the NECP projects that for 2030, there will still be 3.2 GW of installed capacity running on fossil fuels, only a slight decrease from 3.7 GW in 2020.

Based on forecasts for 2030 primary energy consumption, the energy efficiency target for 2030 is estimated to reach a 37.5 per cent, which is higher than the EU-wide target of 32.5 per cent. In addition, an Energy Efficiency Investment Fund is planned with private funds, EU funds and possibly from the state budget. This initiative sounds good on paper, but without a proper assessment and willingness to enforce it, this as well will get lost in the sea of measures that the Romanian NECP offers. Unfortunately, the actions listed throughout the plan are lacking in deadlines for implementation and are not provided with necessary funding. The NECP also only estimates the amount of investment needed across all sectors, but does not provide absolute figures nor links to the available and future means of investment.