

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.

 Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum.)

PROJECT	
Participant:	[101081558] - [EKOLOGICHO SDRUZHENIE ZA ZEMIATA] ([ZA ZEMIATA])
PIC number:	[986197934]
Project name and acronym:	[Citizens'Observatory For Green Deal Financing] — [Citizens4EGDFunding]

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	10
Event name:	Citizen's research – Virtual tours to recovery projects Bulgaria
Type:	conferences
In situ/online:	online
Location:	online
Date(s):	26/07/23, 09/10/23, 13/11/23, 05/03/24, 14/03/24
Website(s) (if any):	<p>Link to the virtual tour video on the project landing page:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investments outrunning reforms: has Bulgaria been successful in tackling energy poverty? https://bankwatch.org/citizens-observatory#Bulgaria <p>Link to the virtual tour video on youtube:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b71oNxnaFA0 <p>Recordings of the webinars available on youtube:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Webinar 'How to tackle energy poverty? Efficient investments and measures': https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQazJHKi91U - Webinar 'Resilient energy communities: Navigating the energy crisis together': https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWIQHLEw9zg - Webinar "Transport Infrastructure and EU funds": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAiyLqJUwI0&t=4646s - Webinar "Renovated home with small bills – easy and for everyone": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zc8c4hEAjos - Webinar "Clean energy for people – the role of heating and cooling plans": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1j4r8zrMThg <p>Articles on Za Zemiata website: https://www.zazemiata.org/graidanski-doklad-zelena-sdelka-video/, https://shorturl.at/bnsAP , https://shorturl.at/HSY68</p> <p>Articles on the project landing page:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Webinar ‘How to tackle energy poverty? Efficient investments and measures’: https://bankwatch.org/event/how-to-tackle-energy-poverty-efficient-investments-and-measures - Webinar ‘Resilient energy communities: Navigating the energy crisis together’: https://bankwatch.org/event/webinar-resilient-energy-communities-navigating-the-energy-crisis-together-2 - Webinar ‘Europe’s Transport Infrastructure: the Role of EU funds for a sustainable connected transport’: https://bankwatch.org/event/europe-s-transport-infrastructure-the-role-of-eu-funds-for-a-sustainable-connected-transport - Two online events with a focus on building renovation programmes and local heating and cooling plans to reduce energy poverty and move beyond solid fuel: https://bankwatch.org/event/two-online-events-with-a-focus-on-building-renovation-programs-and-local-heating-and-cooling-plans-to-reduce-energy-poverty-and-move-beyond-solid-fuel
Participants	
Female:	93
Male:	64
Non-binary:	2
Prefer not to say:	5
Did not provide information:	48
From country 1 [Bulgaria]:	166
From country 2 [Belgium]:	9
From country 3 [Croatia]:	1
From country 4 [Cyprus]:	1
From country 5 [Czech Republic]:	1
From country 6 [Denmark]:	1
From country 7 [Estonia]:	1
From country 8 [France]:	1
From country 9 [Germany]:	5
From country 10 [Greece]:	2
From country 11 [Hungary]:	1
From country 12 [Italy]:	2
From country 13 [Latvia]:	1
From country 14 [Malta]:	1

From country 15 [Poland]:	10		
From country 16 [Romania]:	3		
From country 17 [Slovakia]:	2		
From country 18 [Slovenia]:	1		
From country 19 [Spain]:	2		
From country 20 [Sweden]:	1		
Total number of participants:	212	From total number of countries:	20
Description			
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			
<p>As part of the work package 10, Environmental Association Za Zemiata – Friends of the Earth Bulgaria produced a virtual tour video on energy poverty and public funds in Bulgaria and organized four related webinars and one focusing on the transport infrastructure in Europe and EU funds.</p> <p>Virtual tour video: Investments outrunning reforms: Is Bulgaria successful in tackling energy poverty?, 136 views on YouTube</p> <p>The video shows the drawbacks of a financing program under the Bulgarian recovery fund for renewables in households which excludes energy poor from the procedure, has no informational campaign or regional quota and has complex application procedure. Also, the equipment financed is not used at its full potential as the program does not allow prosumerism with the excess energy. In the video two experts on building renovation and climate and energy give recommendations how the issue can be improved for upcoming investments to target also the social aspect of green transition and improve energy independence. There were two speakers in the video, 1 female and 1 male.</p> <p>Webinar 1: How to tackle energy poverty: Effective measures and investments (Date: 26 July 2023, 17:00- 18:15)</p> <p>Speakers present at the first webinar were an energy efficiency specialist, a Senior Assistant at the Institute of Economic Studies of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences who is part of the working group preparing energy poverty legal criteria and EU policy offices working on approaches to address the issue in EU member states. Gender composition of the panel: 2 females, 1 male.</p> <p>This webinar featured EU and Bulgarian experts who shared their experiences on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different understandings and approaches to tackling energy poverty across Europe. • Building renovation in Bulgaria and how a one-stop shop network could accelerate the green transition of the residential sector. • Country specifics, challenges, and progress in introducing the mechanism for energy poverty reduction in Bulgaria. <p>During the webinar, a special focus was given to the financing procedures in different countries to reduce energy poverty, whether they are present, how accessible they are, and what results they give. The delay in adopting criteria for energy-poor households in Bulgaria proves to deepen the issue and increase the inequalities related to energy access. Decentralised energy production from renewable energy and prosumerism was confirmed by the experts to be key to tackling energy poverty.</p> <p>During the Q&A session a topic that stood out was how the introduction of RES would influence the energy market with the conclusion that it is essential to prevent only large companies ownership, but rather enable individual participation in the energy market in the form of prosumerism or promote the establishment of energy cooperations, a public – citizen initiative to ensure energy independence from huge price fluctuations.</p> <p>There were 34 people present at the webinar, with 21 female and 6 male participants and 7 people who did not provide information on their gender coming from 4 EU countries (Bulgaria, Belgium, Romania and Italy).</p> <p>Webinar 2: Resilient energy communities: Navigating the energy crisis together (Date: 09</p>			

October 2023, 16:00 – 17:30)

Speakers present at the second webinar were an expert in European climate policy and energy democracy, an Energy Communities campaigner working with European federation of citizens energy cooperatives and an expert in climate policies and energy transition. Gender composition of the panel: 2 females, 1 male.

The second webinar delved into the critical role of energy communities during times of energy crisis and the topics covered were:

- Understanding the Energy Crisis: Participants gained insights into the various factors that contributed to the energy crisis of that time, including geopolitical tensions, resource scarcity, and challenges related to fossil fuels, such as volatile energy prices and rising energy poverty.
- What is an Energy Community?: Participants learned about the types of energy communities and the economic, social, and environmental benefits they bring.
- Energy Communities in Bulgaria: The discussion covered the existence of such communities, who can participate in them, and the challenges and opportunities ahead.
- Polish Energy Cooperatives: The current situation and prospects of Polish energy cooperatives were explored.

The webinar also explored the implementation of the Renewable Energy Directive (RED I & RED II) related to the possibility for people to produce their own energy and the EU public financing available for energy cooperatives.

During the Q&A session the legal requirements to start an energy community in Bulgaria and the obstacles faced and lessons learned in Poland were discussed, with the conclusion that energy communities have huge potential once made accessible for the public to join.

This webinar had 64 attendees, with 31 female, 26 male and 1 non-binary participants, while 3 preferred not to say and 3 persons who did not provide information on their gender coming from 7 EU countries (Czech Republic, Greece, Poland, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and Belgium).

Webinar 3: Europe's Transport Infrastructure: The role of EU funds for a sustainable connected transport (13 November 2023, 16:00- 17:30)

The speakers present at the third webinar were expert in sustainable finance working on transport decarbonization, campaigner on energy, climate and transport on EU level and the transformation of mobility system and expert in EU funds and transport, working on preserving biodiversity in transport infrastructure. Gender composition of the panel: 1 female, 2 males.

Europe's trans-European transport network, or the TEN-T policy, has been promoted by the EU as a key instrument providing the connectedness among EU countries with 'coherent, efficient, multimodal, and high-quality transport infrastructure across the EU'.

In practice, the pathway towards achieving these goals has been bumpy. Reports show that in the past 25 years European countries have prioritized roads over railways by far.

Often, EU funds, instrumental for the development of the transport network infrastructure, are spent in conflict with EU environmental legislation. This has been the case with the EU-funded Struma motorway in Bulgaria and the unique Kresna gorge, a high-value Natura 2000 site.

The webinar covered the following topics:

- The current state of affairs in transport network infrastructure in Europe;
- European funding for transport: challenges and future scenarios;
- The case study: Bulgaria and its transport networks under the TEN-T policy – priorities and conflicts in Natura 2000 sites.
- The panelists shared their research and views on the possible future scenarios in the context of the EU's ambition for connectedness of all regions by 2050 and TEN-T revision with the European Green Deal and the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy.

The conclusions are that Europe has directed larger share of public funds to motorways at the expense of rail transport infrastructure. Eastern Europe has far less railway connectivity and transport poverty increases. Public funds need to be directed to low carbon intensive means of transport which also reduces inequality in the society if Europe want to meet EGD targets.

There were 38 people present at the webinar, with 20 females, 14 males and 4 did not provide

information on their gender coming from 14 EU countries (Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Spain, Germany, Denmark, Slovenia, Malta, Sweden, Latvia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Slovakia and Greece).

Webinar 4: Renovated home with small bills – easy and for everyone (05 March 2023, 17:00-18:00)

During the webinar “Renovated home with small bills – easy and for everyone” building renovation and the role of energy offices that support the process were the main agenda. On focus was a building renovation financing program under the Bulgarian Recovery and Resilience Plan. Speakers present at the webinar were: a President of the board of directors of an association of owners of a multifamily building that applied for the last building renovation program and an employee in a “One-stop-shop” type energy office, well acquainted with the steps, procedures and preparation of the necessary documentation. Gender composition of the panel: 1 female, 1 male.

The discussion focused on the opportunities of the program, the challenges faced while applying, the biggest weaknesses of the program, collaboration points between owners and energy offices and improvements made since the previous program for building renovation with public funds support. The call for applications for building renovation of multifamily buildings was still open, so the speakers shared first-hand experience of their path and provided tips to next applicants.

What was highlighted during the webinar was how the existence of “One-stop-shop” type energy office makes building renovation in the municipality area much more popular and also improves the quality of the applications submitted for financing. The creation of six pilot “One-stop-shop” type energy offices is a reform under the NRRP and the webinar showed their importance in reducing the administrative burden and success in the application process of building renovation programs for households.

This webinar had 51 attendees with 21 female, 18 male and 1 non-binary participant, 2 persons preferred not to say and 9 did not provide information on their gender coming from 2 EU countries (Bulgaria, Cyprus).

Webinar 5: Clean energy for people – The role of the local heating & cooling plans (Date 14 March 2023, 09:30 – 13:25)

Speakers present at the last webinar were a climate and circular economy policy expert, working on climate sequestration in buildings, an energy poverty officer, renewable heating campaigner, building decarbonisation, heat planning and energy communities expert and researchers. Gender composition of the panel: 4 females, 4 males.

This online event focused on the role of the local heating and cooling plans to reduce energy poverty and shift away from fossil fuels. Several experts presented studies on whether municipalities with population below 45 thousand can support efficient individual heating, what are the challenges of solid fuel heating in EU and then, looking at the solutions, shared good practices and strategies to transform a coal-based district heating system to a renewable one, accessible and affordable for everyone.

One of the key messages from the event was that to transform a coal-based district heating there should be a combination of measures to firstly reduce heat demand, secondly to improve efficiency and lastly, to install substitutes for supply. Case studies and recommendations on Community heating and cooling initiatives were shared to promote public participation in the transition.

There were 25 people coming from 5 EU countries (Bulgaria, Belgium, Germany, Italy and France) present at the webinar.

All webinars have been recorded and made available on Za Zemiata’s YouTube channel:

- Webinar 1: [How to tackle energy poverty: Effective measures and investments](#) - 80 additional views on YouTube
- Webinar 2: [Resilient energy communities: Navigating the energy crisis together](#) - 72 additional views on YouTube
- Webinar 3: [Europe’s Transport Infrastructure: The role of EU funds for a sustainable connected transport](#) - 58 additional views on YouTube
- Webinar 4: [Renovated home with small bills – easy and for everyone](#) - 82 additional views on YouTube
- Webinar 5: [Clean energy for people – The role of the local heating & cooling plans](#) - 12 additional views on Youtube

In total, 212 people from 20 EU countries with various backgrounds - citizens, energy office employees, journalists, scientists, government and local administration representatives – joined the 5 webinars organised as part of this work package. The webinars also attracted participants from the Western Balkans and the UK which have not been reported.

Summary of the evaluation results:

The EU Survey on Justice, Rights and Values has been distributed to all event attendees via e-mail. 6 individuals have completed the survey, giving the webinars an overall ranking of either 4 or 5 stars. Respondents appreciated the event for its contribution to knowledge, awareness and skills enhancement. Methodology, format and content were highly regarded by all respondents. They also stated that they will use what they learnt in their everyday life/work.

All respondents confirmed that there was action taken by the organiser, which helped to promote gender equality and/or to ensure equal opportunities for all e.g. that the content of the activity took into account differences in situations and needs of different genders, that the organiser made sure that the participant group was diverse, that the visual materials avoided reinforcing gender stereotypes and used a gender neutral voice and that the trainers team was diverse and gender-balanced.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).