

# Summary Report:

## EUKI Networking Event Slovakia

### Renewable Energy Sources Acceleration in Slovakia: Benefits and Challenges of Green Energy Solutions

January 30, 2024, Bratislava

#### Background

The EUKI Networking Event held in Bratislava was organized by Climate Coalition in close collaboration with the EUKI Academy. The Academy of the [European Climate Initiative \(EUKI\)](#) runs (networking) events and trainings on climate action for the EUKI community.

35 representatives and experts from civil society, municipalities, state institutions, businesses, and associations from both Slovakia and Germany participated in the event. The agenda included exploring opportunities to accelerate the utilization and development of renewable energy sources (RES), with a focus on discussing the benefits and barriers to green energy development in Slovakia from various perspectives, including government, business, municipalities, trade unions, and civil society. Furthermore, there was a dedicated discussion on the strategic use of EU instruments such as REPower, RED, and NECP in the development of renewable energy. The event also facilitated a multi-stakeholder dialogue involving key stakeholders to exchange experiences in climate and renewable energy areas and establish sustainable, cross-stakeholder networks. Additionally, knowledge and experience were shared regarding the acceleration of renewable energy expansion in both Germany and Slovakia.

Participants highly valued the networking opportunities provided during the event, emphasizing its significance and benefits. Moreover, the active involvement of key stakeholders from politics, business, and civil society was positively highlighted, underscoring their crucial role in the discussions. Throughout the event, valuable insights were exchanged, shedding light on the current status and the untapped potential for increased utilization of renewable energies in Slovakia.

*The following summary report of the event is composed by Climate Coalition.*

## 1 Advancing RES in Slovakia

The Event focused on the economic potential, benefits, and challenges inherent in the development of renewable energy sources (RES) in Slovakia.

Diverse participants representing municipalities, government, business and NGOs have demonstrated a shared commitment to driving positive change in the future of renewable energy in Slovakia. At the same time, the event underlined the necessity of future cross-collaboration.

It is evident from the discussions that there is a pressing need for active and widespread participation in advancing RES initiatives as well as building on the momentum beyond this event.

*(Note: These summaries are based on statements and observations of participants raised during discussions, however the event was held under the Chatham House Rules.)*

## 2 Key Strategies for Renewable Energy Advancement in Slovakia

### ACKNOWLEDGING THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF RES:

- RES should play a crucial role in Slovakia's future, with climate policy being a central theme across all policies.
- Political and economical factors, with the Russian invasion of Ukraine at a forefront, increased electrification and significant interest from both green producers and investors, are all contributing to the importance of RES.
- Slovakia is taking steps to increase its share of RES, particularly wind energy (750 MW), PV (600 MW) and explore potential of geothermal energy.
- In Germany 50% of total energy share comes from RES. While the instalment and maintenance of RES brought approximately 400 000 new jobs, 50 000 in the last year in Germany.

## DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION:

- Dialogue and collaboration between Germany and Slovakia in the energy field is vital and there is room for improvement in encouraging dialogue between institutions, ministries and across sectors.
- In particular, the economic and social benefits associated with the expansion of renewable energies must be emphasised in order to underline the growing interest of companies and investors in this sector.
- Businesses can be driving forces in the process. Both German and Slovak companies are interested in reducing their greenhouse gas emissions and improving their climate footprint.
- Multi-stakeholder dialogues are an important element to the acceleration of RES, involving key stakeholders such as municipalities, government, businesses, NGOs as well as the general public, in every step of the process. Transparent exchange and open dialogue are crucial.
- Acceptance of renewables can be improved by local energy projects, in which communities benefit, especially economically. People must see and understand the benefits of RES projects. In communications, special attention must be paid to the avoidance of misinformation.

## EFFECTIVE USE OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES:

- Priority for Slovakia is to implement all EU commitments and, to that end, make use of resources such as: Resilience and Recovery Facility, European Structural and Investment Funds, Modernisation Fund and Social Climate Fund.
- In order to overcome renewable energy development barriers, strategic utilisation of EU instruments, such as REPower, RED, and NECP, must be emphasised.
- Massive private investments must also be mobilised.

## OWNERSHIP: KEY ROLES TO ACCELERATE RES

### **Government:**

- Regulatory environment: Establish a supportive regulatory environment for a swift deployment of RES, while prioritising and encouraging energy efficiency. Policies should be clear, predictable, unified and should reflect necessary EU

commitments (transpositions and reforms). Particular attention must be paid to spatial planning, EIA and other environmental permitting.

- Support schemes: Set up financial support schemes in a fair way (“no one left behind”) and tailored to the needs of each group, particularly the vulnerable. Schemes must be unified, not fragmented, and not too administratively complicated. Flat price caps are counter-productive.
- Coordination and cooperation: Foster cooperation across sectors and with different stakeholders while each ministry needs to have clear ownership of the RES topic, depending on their competencies set by law.
- Communication: Effective and supportive communication to highlight the advantages and benefits of RES. Engage with stakeholders, provide education and ensure longer term conditions for employment.
- Education and capacities: Steady development of all types of capacities, including long term readiness and modification of education. Prepare people for new employment by developing new skills.

#### **Municipalities (government's support is needed):**

- Lead on spatial planning, which must be reflecting the needs of communities and environment.
- Exchange experiences and good practices, also with partners from abroad.
- Create and follow strategic documents planning RES deployment.
- Establish good communication with citizens.

#### **Business:**

- Support and cooperate with municipalities, become and inspire local RES leaders.
- Communicate consistently and understandably towards the general public.
- Contribute to job training and education with regards to RES and energy transition.

#### **NGOs:**

- Monitor policies and their implementation, advocate for improvements
- Facilitate multi-stakeholder exchange and dialogue with the general public.

- Provide expert input, based on hands-on experience from the ground and from abroad.
- Educate public, communicate suitable conditions, benefits and inspiring examples of RES development.

## 3 Tackling RES in specific areas

### 3.1 RES and Vulnerable Groups

#### General:

- RES have the potential to effectively address needs of vulnerable groups, particularly at the local level. However, for RES to truly succeed in addressing inequalities, they must be handled in a broader context of solutions.

#### Main principles:

- Defining vulnerability criteria as a part of “energy poverty” and “transportation poverty” definitions. Concept must be tailored to location as well as needs of specific groups.
- System of support must be set for the following specific groups separately: Roma and excluded communities, single parent house-holds, young families, and retired people.
- Cooperation with local stakeholders, such as municipalities, NGOs, is crucial for data collection, delivery channels and feedback.
- Concept of sharing and energy efficiency are priorities, which must be reflected accordingly in different policies. Public and shared transportation, as well as energy saving renovations and energy communities are beneficial for climate, economy and people.
- Funding and support schemes must be made simple, yet unified to suit those with different vulnerabilities.
- Complex services must be provided, including support, advice, awareness and education. Good example is energy efficient, RES equipped, social housing (with other related services).

## 3.2 RES and Biodiversity

### General:

- There is a need for a balanced, transparent and informed approach to RES implementation, open mindedness to negative aspects and engaging communication with the public.

### Main principles:

- Acknowledge the changing landscape due to the climate crisis and its impact on biodiversity.
- Recognize that each renewable activity has a negative impact – and rather emphasise mitigation strategies than aim for zero effect.
- Public engagement is important in order to build transparency and trust. There is a need to address emotional concerns and people's preferences - new strategic communication.
- Pressure state legislators to protect environment for RES projects and biodiversity protection (Natura 2000).
- Benefits for the locals - municipalities, people - should be important part of projects.
- Need for transparent and predictable environment for all.
- Agriculture is an opportunity – as an initial bio-diverse friendly step connected to nature conservation.
- Emphasise the need to simplify the renewable energy implementation process for increased efficiency and effectiveness.
- Legal environment in Slovakia is under a lot of uncertainty - Climate law is under question.
- Businesses with the support of NGOs could play pivotal role as motivators for nature sensitive acceleration.

### 3.3 RES and Business

#### General:

- The discussion stressed a strong call to the government for a stable legislative framework and a vision-based systematic coordination. New types of education are needed, which prepare people for a successful transition towards a more sustainable energy future.

#### Main conclusions:

- More significant energy production from RES is seen as beneficial, prompting exploration into sectors that can contribute to generating more renewable energy.
- Adapting production to the availability of RES, addressing the complexities in the transition, and preparing for additional fixed costs, including investments in storage solutions like batteries, are crucial for businesses.
- A stable legislative framework is identified as the top priority, ensuring predictability and encouraging long-term investments. Coordination between ministries, as seen in Germany, is considered a positive example.
- Engaging with the public and prioritising smaller businesses. Shifting communication from selling specific products to selling the benefits of climate-friendly solutions, such as heat instead of heat pumps.
- Recognizing the global context of decarbonization challenges, smaller countries, like Slovakia, may have relatively easier implementation due to their size.

### 3.4 RES and Municipalities

#### General:

- Urgent need for educating experts and planners, with a call to finance the development of necessary capacities.

#### Main conclusions:

- Emphasis on changing processes related to European Funds (EŠIF and Resilience and Recovery Fund)) to facilitate energy efficiency in buildings and renewable energy initiatives at the municipal level.

- SIEA (Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency) is establishing regional centers to support municipalities in renewable energy initiatives.
- Propose that the administrative burden and implementation responsibility should be with the government rather than burdening municipalities.
- Inspiration from OECD's perspective that towns serve as engines of growth.
- Encourage the establishment of energy communities with support from NGOs.
- Promote exchange of practices among municipalities - to discuss benefits, and explore financing options for RES projects.
- Advocate for collaboration with universities, there is already a cooperation between the Faculty of Architecture and IEPD (Passive house Institute).
- Encourage municipalities to consider RES solutions for street lights as part of their sustainable development plans.
- Emphasise the need for integrating public services, particularly waste management and public transport, to enhance efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and independence.

## 4 From Commitment to Action: Driving Renewable Energy Excellence in Slovakia through Strategic Collaboration

The timeline, which EU member states set to accelerate RES deployment, is intense, and it calls for cooperation across sectors, as well as clear ownership of the topic by relevant ministries.

In the Climate coalition Slovakia we will be supporting the wind acceleration group at the National Information and Coordination Agency (NIKA). We will advocate for a good transposition and implementation of EU commitments, as well as faster yet engaging RES planning and permitting. We will also maintain contact with all of you, our partners.

### 2024

- **July:** First part of the Renewable Energy Directive (so called RED III) must be transposed
- **September:** Legislative change to support heat pumps (based on NRRP)



- **December:** Legislation on wind acceleration areas is adopted and gains effect (based on NRRP)
- **December:** Methodology to create wind acceleration areas is published
- **December:** Legislation linked with construction permitting

## 2025

- **March:** Integration RES into the grid
- **May:** Transposition deadline of the whole RED III
- **June:** Legislative changes to accelerate environmental permitting (based on NRRP)
- **November:** All RED permitting procedures must be in electronic form
- **December:** Adoption and implementation of methodology for wind acceleration areas
- **December:** Sectoral legislation (environmental) linked with energy reform

## 2026

- **February:** Designation of RES acceleration areas must be completed
- **June:** Institutional change of decision-making structure and strengthened capacity for environmental permitting by 110 people to speed up process
- **June:** Incorporation of time limits for EIA procedure

## 5 Annexes

### Agenda of event

#### 9:00 - 9:45 Welcome and Opening Speeches

- Opening remarks
  - **Her Excellency Barbara Wolf**, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Slovakia
  - **Mr Kamil Šaško**, 1st State Secretary of the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic

- Setting the scene
  - **Mr Maximilian von Kleist-Retzow**, Counsellor of the European Climate Policy at the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action

*Topics to be covered: European Green Deal (EGD), green energy, and RES acceleration*

### **9:45 - 10:45 Panel Discussion: Benefits and Challenges of Green Energy Solutions in Slovakia**

- Exploring the benefits and challenges of RES development in Slovakia faced by different stakeholders
- Perspectives from business, municipalities, NGOs and industries
  - **Mr Henrich Krejčí**, Director at the Green Economy Department at the Recovery and Resilience Plan of Slovakia
  - **Mr Tomáš Nemec**, Energy Advisor at the Union of Towns and Cities of Slovakia
  - **Mr Vladimír Orovnický**, President at the Slovak Association for Refrigeration, Air Conditioning and Heat Pumps

*Moderator: Ms Lucia Szabová, Climate Coalition SK*

### **10:45 - 11:15 Q&A Session**

### **11:15 - 11:45 Coffee Break**

### **11:45 - 12:45 Discussion in a „World-Café“ format**

- Working groups taking a closer look at Challenges, Benefits and Inspirations of The Green Transformation from 4 different points of view

*Note: The outputs from the group discussions will be recorded for the needs of later summarization*

### **12:45 – 13:10 Closing remarks**

- Summary of the group discussions and main conclusions

### **From 13:15 Lunch / Networking**

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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