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# The state of youth engagement in the implementation of the Just Transition Mechanism of the EU



Generation  
Climate  
Europe

CEE

Bankwatch  
Network

# Authors

## Writing

Lorenzo Manca - Climate Justice Coordinator. GCE

Jens Hunsbeth Schreuder - Just Transition Officer. CEE Bankwatch Network

## Research

Lorenzo Manca(GCE), Jens H. Schreuder (Bankwatch), Elizabeth Chavdarska (GCE), Ioana Gabriela Doleanu (Trento University), Petr Franc (GCE), Agnes Gkoutziamani (GCE), Katharina Hartmann (GCE), Jana Leggen (GCE), Maris Pedaja (Bankwatch), Bianka Szabo (GCE), Kristin Tsenkova (GCE)

## Editing & Layout

Stephanny Olivieri (GCE), Martina Razzaboni (GCE), Angelica Giambalvo (GCE), Elisabeth Mauguy (GCE), Emily Gray (Bankwatch)

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# List of abbreviations

EIB.....	European Investment Bank
EU.....	European Union
JTF.....	Just Transition Fund
JTM.....	Just Transition Mechanism
NGO.....	Non-governmental Organisation
NRW.....	North-Rhine Westphalia
TJTP.....	Territorial Just Transition Plan

## Reference

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# Executive Summary

The **Just Transition Mechanism (JTM)** is a regional development programme of the European Union (EU) aiming to support decarbonisation in those regions whose economy depends on the production or consumption of fossil fuels. Spearheaded by the €19.5 billion investments of the Just Transition Fund (JTF), the JTM is supposed to be operative between 2021 and 2027 to create new low-emission economic activities and reskill workers currently employed in fossil fuels-related sectors. Its intervention is expected to diversify the economy of target regions and end their dependency on fossil fuels.

As of 2022, the implementation of the JTM is at the initial phase. In order to access funding, Member States must prepare dedicated planning documents called **Territorial Just Transition Plans (TJTPs)** for their regions that depend on fossil fuels. The TJTPs must justify the need for investments in those regions and outline a clear pathway for the phasing out of fossil fuels and the launch of new green economic activities. EU Member States have been preparing their TJTPs across 2020 and 2021. Throughout 2022, the European Commission is reviewing and approving the TJTPs to start financing the transitions they outline.

As for all planning documents for territorial cohesion funds of the EU, the TJTPs are supposed to comply with the **partnership principle**. This principle requires the national governments to prepare and manage their plans with input and support from local authorities, businesses, social actors and civil society representatives. Since the economic restructuring envisaged in the TJTPs will have long-lasting effects on the targeted communities, a strong implementation of the partnership principle is fundamental to make sure the people living in these communities are engaged in the decisions on their future from start to end.

**In particular, young people aged 16-29, as the next generations to live in those territories, have a central role to play in the development of TJTPs** and the visions these plans outline - a role that is recognised and actively promoted by the EU itself. However, GCE and Bankwatch's **first report on the state of youth engagement in the JTM** from May 2022 has ([link](#)) found that youth engagement has been generally dissatisfactory in the 12 EU countries included in our assessment. Some form of specific youth engagement could be found only in 7 countries, and in most cases the formats were not sufficient to gather a meaningful input to the TJTPs from the youth that were involved.

**This report provides an update to the youth engagement activities in the just transition of the EU that GCE and Bankwatch covered in our first report.** The update expands the profiles of the twelve EU Member States assessed in the first report, and adds three new country profiles, expanding the analysis to a total of fifteen EU Member States. For each country, we look at the partnership processes set up by the national and local authorities in preparation of their TJTPs and identify, wherever they are present, the specific activities for the engagement of young people. **For eight countries, the information from institutional sources was complemented with interviews to twenty-one local youth activists and representatives** active on the just transition at the local level, whether they participated in the writing of TJTPs directly or from outside.

## Main Findings

- **Youth representatives were engaged in some form in the development of TJTPs in eleven EU countries out of the fifteen under analysis**, which is an encouraging figure compared to our first report.
- **The quality of engagement varies considerably from state to state and region to region.** There are still several cases in which engagement was not meaningful.
- **In most cases where youth was engaged, there are plans to keep engaging it through membership in the Monitoring Committees**, while in the cases where youth was not engaged it is rare to find plans to remedy.
- **As found in our first assessment, youth engagement still proved particularly successful in those regions where the local civil society had the capacity to mobilise and represent the voice of youth**, which creates a gap with other regions where the civil society has less resources and capacity.

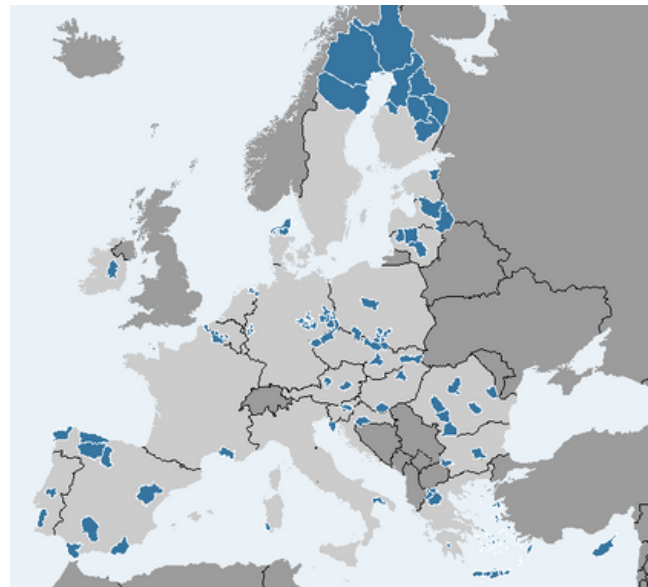
## Recommendations

- **The engagement of youth in the TJTPs must be harmonised across and within all EU Member States.** The transition envisaged by the JTM cannot be truly just unless young people provide input not just to a few, but to all TJTPs.
- **EU Member States must make sure youth representatives sit in all their Monitoring Committees,** with an eye on diversity and representation of underrepresented youth.
- **The European Commission should keep promoting youth engagement through its technical support and funding to civil society.** Its technical support should provide concrete indications to state authorities and civil servants to design meaningful youth engagement processes in line with the "Toolkit for youth participation in the JTF" and make local youth aware of the funding opportunity offered by the call EUTEens4Green.
- **The European Parliament should use its monitoring powers to their full extent** to ensure that the partnerships of TJTPs are meaningful, fair, inclusive and properly implemented. It should open up to input from the civil society to complement the reports from the Member States and the European Commission.

# Introduction

Since the European Commission started its mandate in December 2019 under the presidency of Ursula von der Leyen, the core of its programme has been the European Green Deal, a political pathway to put the European Union on track to become carbon-neutral by 2050.<sup>1</sup> The Green Deal made clear that the transition it set in motion would be “just and inclusive”(p.1) by supporting the people and businesses that would face the hardest challenges from the abandoning of fossil fuels, which is the necessary precondition to achieve a carbon-neutral economy.

In this context, the Green Deal put forward the **Just Transition Mechanism (JTM)** as a dedicated financial programme to provide support to those regions that are particularly negatively affected by the phasing-out of fossil fuels, usually because their economy is overly dependent on the production and/or consumption of coal, oil and gas. The European Commission already identified the NUTS 3 statistical regions across the EU that depend on fossil fuels in the context of the European Semester 2020, and enumerated them in the Annex D of each country report<sup>3</sup> (see map).



Map of the regions identified by the European Commission to be supported by the JTM. ©European Commission

To these and other regions justified by Member States, the Just Transition Mechanism provides targeted support to the tune of €55 billion divided between three “pillars”: (1) the **Just Transition Fund (JTF)**, (2) a **dedicated Just Transition scheme under the InvestEU programme** and (3) a **new public sector loan facility** consisting of EU grants and loans from the European Investment Bank (EIB).<sup>4</sup>

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1. European Commission (2019). COM/2019/640 final. The European Green Deal. EU:Brussels.

2. For more information, see eurostat.eu. NUTS MAPS. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 10.10.2022).

3. European Commission (2022). 2020 European Semester: Country Reports. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).

4. European Commission (2022). Just Transition funding sources. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022)





## 1. The Just Transition Fund (JTF)

The Just Transition Fund is the leading pillar of the Just Transition Mechanism. First proposed in January 2020 by the European Commission, the JTF is a territorial cohesion fund financed by the EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027. The Regulation establishing the JTF entered into force in July 2021, defining its structure and functioning.<sup>5</sup>

The JTF is entitled to finance investments in new businesses, research & innovation, renewable energy, sustainable mobility, district heating, digitalisation, decontamination and circularity. To complement such investments, the JTF can also finance projects on the reskilling and upskilling of workers from the fossil fuels sector, as well as job-search assistance, education and social inclusion activities.

The Fund is endowed with €17.5 billion in 2018 values (roughly €19.5 billion in 2021), which have been allocated to all 27 EU Member States in precise quotas. The top five recipients are Poland (20%), Germany (13%), Romania (11%), Czech Republic (8.5%) and Bulgaria (6.7%), which combined account for 59.2% of total funding.

## 2. Dedicated scheme under InvestEU

InvestEU is an EU programme to support sustainable investment, innovation and job creation which is expected to mobilise around €372 billion under the current Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027.<sup>6</sup> The dedicated Just Transition scheme under InvestEU was launched in January 2020 and is expected to mobilise €10-15 billion, mostly in private sector investments. Projects in regions supported by the JTF can benefit from the scheme provided such investments are key to the transition outlined in the relevant TJTP.<sup>7</sup>

5. EU (2021). Regulation (EU) 2021/1056 establishing the Just Transition Fund. EU: Brussels.

6. European Commission (2022). InvestEU. (Link. Last consulted: 04.10.2022).

7. EU (2021). REGULATION (EU) 2021/523 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 24 March 2021 establishing the InvestEU Programme and amending Regulation (EU) 2015/1017. EU: Brussels.

### 3. Public sector loan facility

The third pillar of the Just Transition Mechanism is a new public sector loan facility leveraged by the European Investment Bank (EIB). It comprises €1.5 billion in grants from the EU budget and €10 billion in loans from the EIB. The facility will exclusively target public entities, providing support to projects in the regions targeted by the JTF that do not produce a sufficient stream of revenues to be financed commercially. It is expected to mobilise roughly €18.5 billion in public investments.<sup>8</sup>

#### Access to funding and the partnership principle

According to the JTF Regulation (2021/1056), Member States seeking to receive project funding for their eligible regions must deliver **Territorial Just Transition Plans (TJTPs)** to the European Commission. The TJTPs are documents that must include a justification for identifying the concerned territories as particularly negatively affected by the phasing-out of fossil fuels, and outline detailed investment strategies towards a climate neutral economy, in line with the EU emissions reduction targets for 2030 and 2050.

Each EU Member State designates a national ministry to oversee the writing of one or more TJTPs in their respective country. It is up to each government to decide how many TJTPs they want to present to the Commission and for which regions, as long as they can justify it. The regions identified by the Commission have been the starting point for all Member States. Upon request, the Commission provides technical assistance to the ministries, which is then carried out by external partners such as academic institutions and consulting firms.

For all its territorial cohesion funds, the EU has been embracing the **partnership principle**, which requires that Member States manage the decisions and implementation measures connected to the funds together with local authorities, economic and social partners, civil society representatives and academic institutions.<sup>9</sup> For the TJTPs, all relevant regulations and internal EU documents underline the importance of partnerships and transparency.<sup>10</sup>

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8. EU (2021). The Public Sector Loan Facility of the Just Transition Mechanism ([Link](#). Last consulted: 10.09.2022).

9. Heinelt, H., & Petzold, W. (2018). "The structural funds and EU cohesion policy". In Handbook of European Policies. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing. doi: <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781784719364.00015>

10. See the Common Provisions Regulation (2021/1060), the JTF Regulation (2021/1056) and the internal document of the Commission on Territorial Just Transition Plans (SWD(2021) 275 final).

In particular, **the JTF Regulation provides that the preparation and implementation of the TJTPs must be deliberated in cooperation with the relevant partners** mentioned above. However, so far the partnership principle has been deployed very differently from region to region. The TJTPs are usually drafted by the competent national ministry with the assistance of national and/or local working groups composed of government officials, representatives of the European Commission, local authorities, business associations, academics, trade unions and NGO representatives. On top of the working groups, state authorities may decide to consult stakeholder groups through a variety of formats, such as workshops, conferences, calls for projects, surveys, bilateral meetings and public consultations. All these partnership instruments often have widely diverging degrees of influence on the development of the TJTPs, sometimes even from region to region within the same country.

### State of play

The following figure provides an overview of the steps undergone by the JTM so far and those yet to come.

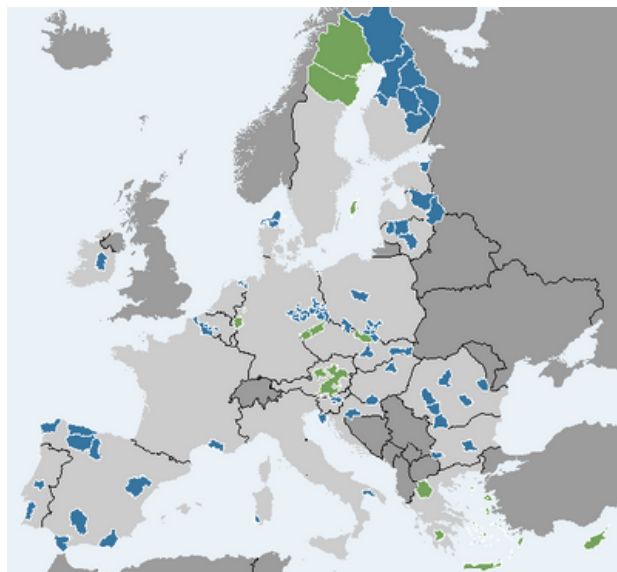


As of September 2022, the majority of TJTPs are still in the **programming phase**. Most TJTPs have been submitted to the European Commission, which is currently evaluating them and negotiating their content with the national authorities. This process lacks transparency, as the Commission has always avoided to publish the draft TJTPs and its exchanges with Member States despite the repeated requests of several stakeholders. As a result, it is not possible to know the development stage of each TJTP until it is approved by the Commission. Once a TJTP is approved, the Commission typically makes a press release and marks the related region in green on its map of the just transition regions ([link](#)), with a link to the published TJTP.

The European Commission is expected to give its approval to most TJTPs throughout 2022. As of the date of this report, the TJTPs of Greece, Cyprus, North-Rhein Westphalia (Germany), Austria, Sweden and Czech Republic have already been approved (see map). Once a TJTP is approved, the authorities of the Member State can begin the **implementation phase**, which consists of preparing project proposals to be financed by the three pillars of the JTM. In line with the content of the TJTPs, projects can be used for economic diversification and the upskilling and reskilling of workers employed in the fossil fuels sector. Funding can also be given to projects that fall out of the scope of greater economic diversification provided it is directly linked to specific objectives of the JTF or clearly contributes to the implementation of the TJTP. This can include investments on fields such as renewable energy, energy efficiency or research and innovation. The use of this clause will require particular attention, as it could be used by Member States in opaque ways that go against the purpose of the just transition, such as compensating coal industries or paying for the environmental damage they caused.

In parallel with implementation runs the **monitoring phase**. This involves reporting on the state of the projects that receive funding, the degree to which they fulfil indicators, and how they align with certain criteria set out in the relevant EU regulations and in the TJTPs. Relevant stakeholders are supposed to be involved in this phase as well through dedicated **Monitoring Committees** set up by their national and/or local authorities.

According to the JTF Regulation, a first review of the implementation of the JTF has to be done by the Commission by 30 June 2025 and be submitted to the European Parliament and the Council of the EU.



Map of the regions for which the European Commission has approved a TJTP (in green). ©European Commission

# Section 1. The engagement of the youth in the Just Transition Mechanism

The ambitious objective of the JTM is to reshape the socio-economic future of entire regions in the EU. Given the magnitude of the envisaged change, **next generations are a key stakeholder as the citizens who are expected to inherit what the JTM will build in terms of job opportunities, socio-economic conditions, infrastructures and environmental restoration.** It is hardly conceivable that the future of a community is decided without the people who will live in it. The engagement of young people in the just transition is thus necessary to ensure the JTM achieves its objectives, serves the future of the communities it is supporting, and guarantees intergenerational justice in the decisions that are made.

The European Commission is the institution of the EU tasked by the JTF Regulation with coordinating the implementation of the TJTPs and providing technical support to Member States. In this role, the Commission has addressed the engagement of civil society in the drafting of TJTPs, including the engagement of young people as a specific stakeholder group within civil society. This section will present the main documents and positions of the Commission on youth engagement in order to provide a background to our analysis of their implementation country by country covered by Section 2.

## EU efforts to include youth in the just transition

**From the beginning of the preparation of TJTPs in late 2020, the European Commission has made considerable efforts to have young people included in the just transition by sponsoring their participation in decision making and launching a dedicated call for projects.**

In January 2021, when most Member States already started working on TJTPs, the Commission published a guidelines document called **“Youth for a Just Transition. A toolkit for youth participation in the JTF”**, whose stated aim is achieving a participation of young people to the TJTPs that is “ambitious, meaningful and numerous” (p.9).<sup>11</sup> We will expand on its content and its role further in this section.

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11. European Commission (2021). Youth for a just transition. A toolkit for youth participation in the Just Transition Fund. EU: Brussels.

Later on, in September 2021, the **Commission reiterated the fundamental role of youth participation in an internal document** on the TJTPs and their evaluation.<sup>12</sup> In the document, the Commission highlighted that the partnership principle is a key feature of cohesion policy, and that “the JTF is about inventing a new economic and social future for these areas, and young people must play an active role in this” (p.20). Although such statements are not binding for the evaluation of TJTPs, they serve as a politically relevant acknowledgement.

Alongside policy documents, the Commission has also put on the table some funding for youth in the just transition in the context of 2022 as the European Year of Youth. In June 2022, the Commission officially announced the launch of **EUTeens4Green**, a EUR 1 million worth experimental call for projects aimed at financing projects of young people aged 15-24 in the just transition regions.<sup>13</sup> Managed by a consortium of NGOs (including Bankwatch, with external support from GCE), EUTeens4Green is now undergoing the collection and selection of projects, which is expected to be finalised by the end of 2022. The selected projects are expected to be run in 2023 - 24.



Official logo of EUTeens4Green  
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### **Assessing youth engagement in the just transition: filling the gap**

Now, when it comes to suggest concrete measures to apply its call for **meaningful youth participation**, the Commission does not provide a specific definition of this concept. However, its Toolkit for Youth Participation in the JTF does specify that youth participation is meaningful provided that it respects some basic conditions grouped in three pillars:

#### **1) Before you start - Adapt and enable**

- Treating young people as equals
- Setting up a youth engagement process with clear goals and a precise scope
- Co-creating the rules of the process with youth
- Communicating and advertising the process through youth-friendly channels
- Building partnerships with local actors connected to youth (schools, associations etc.)

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12. European Commission (2021). COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT on the territorial just transition plans SWD(2021) 275 final.

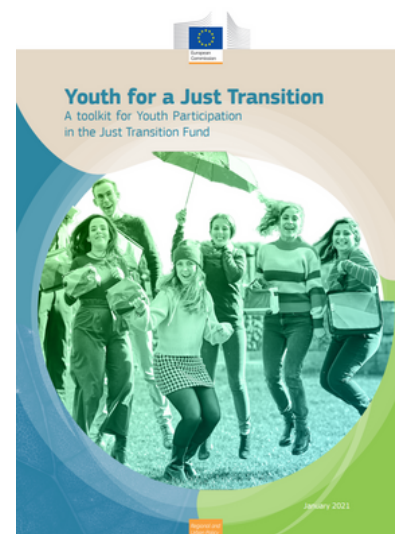
13. European Commission (2022). EU Teens 4 Green: winners of the call will promote youth participation in just transition. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022)

## 2) Youth participation - Work with them, not for them

- Involving youth across all stages of the process
- Giving youth a real role in the debate and the policy projects
- Recognising that youth is not a homogenous group
- Reaching out to marginalised groups and individuals within youth itself
- Mapping, listing and connecting local youth actors
- Adapting communication to the style of young people

## 3) Close the circle

- Providing for follow-up processes to make youth aware of how their input was used
- Making participation continuous to make sure youth are engaged throughout the policy-making processes



©European Commission

We believe that the principles and actions defined in the Commission's Toolkit are a good first step to empower young people to provide a concrete input to the TJTPs of their region. However, although the Commission has shared the Toolkit with the Member States, local authorities and other stakeholders, as of October 2022 it has not yet carried out an assessment of whether and how the Toolkit has been implemented in the making of TJTPs.

**Our series of reports aims to fill the lack of a EU-wide assessment on the meaningful engagement<sup>14</sup> of youth in the TJTPs** by providing an overview of the youth engagement activities reported by the EU Member States and complementing them with the insights from youth activists from the regions included in the just transition.

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14. In this report, we rather use the word "engagement", as we believe it suggests that youth are active part of decision making, while participation suggests joining a process where someone else decides.

# Section 2. Situation of youth engagement for the Territorial Just Transition Plans of fifteen EU Member States

This section will outline the engagement activities specifically dedicated to young people in the decision making and writing of the Territorial Just Transition Plans in fifteen EU Member States: **Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Spain.**

The countries included in the report were chosen based on their weight within the JTF funding allocation and a varied geographical coverage of EU Member States. The regions we focused on are those first identified as beneficiaries of the JTF by the European Commission in the Annex D of the country reports for the European Semester 2020. Any other regions for which Member States are writing TJTPs have not been considered. The approval of their application is not assured and they might have to be excluded from future reports if the Commission rejected it.

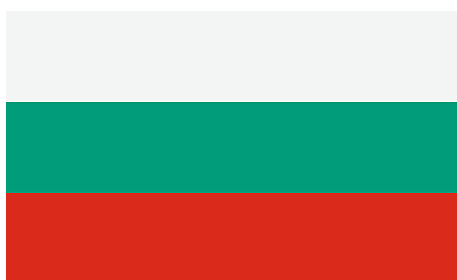
Wherever information is available, the situations of the single regions that are applying for funding under the JTM are dealt with in as much detail as possible. **The information used for the country and region profiles comes mostly from publicly available official sources,** including reports from the European Commission, national and regional authorities, and the consultancies that supported the governments with the TJTPs. The previous Bankwatch reports on the state of TJTPs provided much of the context information.<sup>15</sup>

For the sake of including the voice of youth representatives themselves and conveying their experiences on the engagement processes, **GCE complemented the information from the Member States with interviews with local youth climate activists active on the just transition in the targeted regions.** For the first issue of the report, nine interviews could be conducted between January and April 2022, covering five countries (Poland, Germany, Italy, Estonia and the Netherlands) and nine regions (Eastern Wielkopolska, Upper Silesia, Lower Silesia, Lausitzer Revier, Rheinisches Revier, Sulcis, Taranto, Ida-Viru and Groningen). **For this second issue, six extra interviews could be added.** They were carried out between May and September 2022, and they cover four countries (Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia and Greece) and as many regions (Bobov Dol, Ida Viru, Moravian Silesia and Western Macedonia), **bringing our research to a total of fifteen interviews with twenty-one people.** The resulting country profiles will follow now in alphabetical order.

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15. All reports are accessible at the web page <https://bankwatch.org/project/just-transition#project-publications>





## Bulgaria

In the 2020 country report, the European Commission indicated that the just transition in Bulgaria is supposed to focus mostly on the major mining area of **Maritsa**, in the Stara Zagora Province. This mining area accounts for 85% of all jobs in the coal sector of the country, with over 10.700 workers in the mines and 1.800 in the energy plants. The Commission also suggested to include the second Bulgarian coal mining area by size near the town of **Bobov Dol**, in the Province of Kyustendil, where around 1.500 jobs depend on the brown coal industry.<sup>16</sup>

The overseeing and drafting of the TJTPs in Bulgaria is entrusted to the national Ministry of Energy. The Ministry is writing three TJTPs for the Provinces of Stara Zagora, Kyustendil and, additionally, Pernik, which borders Bobov Dol. The consultancy firm PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PwC) provides technical assistance in the process. The partnership with relevant stakeholders is managed mostly by PwC at the national level and the local authorities in the two targeted coal regions. In early 2021, the consultant first set up an ad-hoc national working group of 15 experts and former directors of coal industries. After that, throughout 2021 it reached out to national and local authorities, businesses, trade unions and environmental NGOs to consult them via bilateral meetings. In most cases, these meetings aimed at illustrating the strategy and progress of the working group, with the possibility for participants to give feedback. No multi-stakeholder meetings were organised to exchange views and gather proposals.

**Youth associations did not feature among the stakeholders approached by the consultant to provide feedback on the TJTPs**, but in its final report they were indicated as a potential stakeholder for the implementation phase.<sup>17</sup>

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16. EU (2020). COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Country Report Bulgaria 2020. SWD/2020/501 final.

17. PwC Bulgaria (2021). Assistance in the preparation of territorial plans for a just transition in the Republic of Bulgaria – Stara Zagora region. 14.12.2021. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 10.09.2022)

As Bulgaria underwent four government changes between 2020 and 2022, the consistency of the work on the TJTPs has been negatively affected. While most other EU Member States had submitted their final drafts by May 2022, Bulgaria has not yet submitted theirs. A final public consultation was held as late as summer 2022, when the government published the draft of the TJTPs on its website and opened them for feedback from the public between 2-23 August. Only two contributions have been disclosed to date: one from a trade union, and one from a coal company.<sup>18</sup> There is not a clear timeline for the next steps of the development of the TJTPs. However, the final drafts should be handed over to the European Commission by October 2022, which Bankwatch sources deem the final deadline before the country loses access to the JTM.

As of September 2022, the drafts of the TJTPs are available online.<sup>18</sup> The sections on public consultations, which are identical across all the drafts, are extremely vague in referring to what was done specifically. During a field trip, Bankwatch found that the prevailing opinion among local authorities and civil society actors was that consultations were not truly taken into account by the Ministry.<sup>19</sup> **In terms of youth engagement, the drafts of the TJTPs do not refer to the engagement of youth in the programming phase and in the upcoming monitoring phase.**

**Some youth engagement activities were done locally at the initiative of NGOs and local authorities.** WWF, in particular, was quite active in organising and co-organising workshops, events and roundtables where young people were trained to bring input and could connect with local politicians. **However, these activities are not specifically designed to provide input to TJTPs.** Since even official consultations are suspected to remain unheard, it is hard to imagine an informal input will be taken into account. The fact that the latest available drafts of the TJTPs do not feature any input from youth further show that **youth engagement in the Bulgarian just transition has been, and risks to remain, insufficient.**

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18. Bulgarian Ministry of Energy (2022). Териториални планове за справедлив преход. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).

19. Ana Kuzmanic (2022). Bulgaria on the road to the just transition ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).

### Just Transition Region - Stara Zagora

Stara Zagora is an administrative province in the East of Bulgaria that is home to the main coal mining area in the country, Maritsa, around the town of Galabovo. Coal mining and energy generation account for over 12.000 jobs in the territory.

The local Development Agency supports the Ministry with the local TJTP. In terms of consultations, the Agency organised, in partnership with Europe Direct and WWF Bulgaria, a regular event every September in 2020, 2021 and 2022.<sup>20</sup> The hybrid events took place in Stara Zagora city to discuss the just transition in the region with local, national and European partners. No youth speakers were included in the programme of 2020.<sup>21</sup> In the 2021 edition, one of the sessions did include four youth representatives from student associations and NGOs.<sup>22</sup> According to a reply we received from a representative of the Development Agency, there was no interest from these youth representatives in being further involved after the event. **The third edition on 30 September 2022 was explicitly focused on youth.** Our researcher joined it, and saw that NGOs, trade unions and authorities discussed actions such as awareness raising, fighting brain drain and including youth in the Monitoring Committees. However, this event came too close to the publishing of the report for us to monitor the follow up.

### Just Transition Region - Bobov Dol

Bobov Dol is a municipality in the Province of Kyustendil bordering the Province of Pernik. The Commission estimated that around 1.500 local jobs still depend on the brown coal industry out of a population of around 9.000 inhabitants.

In terms of local engagement for the TJTP, a noteworthy initiative are the **"Panda Labs Junior for a Just Transition"** organised by WWF and JA Bulgaria in summer 2022.<sup>23</sup> Over 100 local high school and university students were trained by WWF on the just transition and worked in teams to come up with proposals that were then presented to a roundtable with local politicians. According to two organisers from JA that we interviewed, the politicians reacted positively, but no follow up was planned. WWF let us know that the labs were not meant to inform the TJTP.

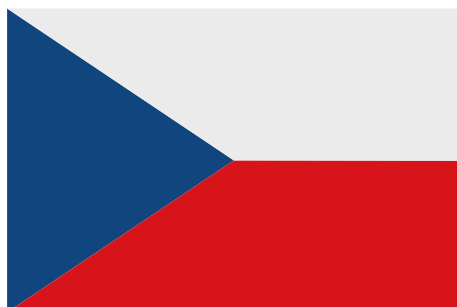
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20. New Energy Mix (2022). About. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).

21. New Energy Mix (2020). Preliminary agenda ([Link](#). Last consulted: 24.09.2022).

22. WWF & SZREDA (2021). 4th Forum of Mayors on Just Transition. Agenda. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 10.09.2022).

23. WWF Bulgaria (2022). Младежката програма на WWF – Panda Labs. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).



## Czechia

The just transition in Czechia is targeting the two coal mining regions spanning the three provinces (kraj) of **Moravskoslezský, Ústecký and Karlovarský** which together are home to over 21.000 people working directly in coal mines and coal-fired energy plants, plus around 19.000 indirect jobs.<sup>24</sup>

The national Ministry of Regional Development oversees the development of the three Czech TJTPs, with technical assistance provided by the Frankfurt School of Management and Finance and the Technical University of Prague.



Bílina coal mine. Ústecký Kraj. ©Milan Jáhna

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24. EU (2020). COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Country Report Czech Republic 2020. SWD/2020/502 final.

The Ministry structured its partnership with relevant stakeholders around a national working group called **Transformation Platform**, established in October 2020. The working group is supposed to provide stakeholders with a means to influence the drafting of the TJTPs. It is structured in thematic working groups, and it is composed of 39 members from national ministries, local authorities and representatives from business and trade unions. Civil society representatives were initially not included in the Platform. However, after some repeated petitioning, a single representative from the NGO Centre for Transport and Energy was allowed to join in 2021 with a mandate to represent the entire civil society.<sup>25</sup>

**Youth is represented in the Transformation Platform through representatives of the Czech Council for Children and Youth.** Two of them could be interviewed for this report. From both our interviews and the contacts of Bankwatch in the Platform, the consultation format turned out to be problematic. The meetings are structured for one-way communication from the Ministry about the current state of the TJTPs draft. A first draft was presented to participants already during the first online meeting in October 2020, so that there was never a phase of brainstorming with participants. Following each online meeting, participants are given a one week deadline to submit feedback on the information they receive. The short deadline and the lack of direct communication during meetings significantly inhibits the possibility of providing meaningful input. However, according to sources from Bankwatch the working group did provide feedback for the TJTPs, and some of it was taken up from one version of the draft to another.

Besides the working group, consultation activities took place at the local level as well through local working groups that mirror the national one. **Youth representatives have also been included in the local working groups**, although the opinion of one of them we interviewed did not diverge from that of his national counterparts. In some cases, most notably Moravskoslezský Kraj, **local authorities organised further youth engagement activities in the form of school visits and dialogues with top-level politicians.**

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25. Bärbel Rösch, L. & Epifanio, D. (2022). Just transition in 7 central and eastern European countries. What works and what does not. CEE Bankwatch: Prague.

The final drafts of the Czech TJTPs were submitted as part of a national Just Transition Programme in July 2022, and approved by the Commission on 26 September 2022.<sup>26</sup> They are publicly available on the website of the Ministry.<sup>27</sup> In the final text of the TJTPs, the Transformation Platform and the local working groups are expected to act as Monitoring Committees during the implementation phase. Although youth representatives are not explicitly mentioned as members, this probably means that **the youth representatives and associations that have been represented so far will likely remain as members of the Monitoring Committee**. The questions now is whether the same format will be retained or if it will be reformed to address its flaws.

Overall, although young people were and will be represented in the partnership with relevant stakeholders in Czechia, **there are still several critical points both on the functioning of the partnership itself and on how meaningful the role of youth representatives is**. It is not yet clear if the Czech authorities are planning to address these issues.

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26. European Commission (2022). EU Cohesion Policy: €1.64 billion for a just climate transition in Czechia. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).

27. DotaceEU (2022). Plán spravedlivé územní transformace (PSÚT). ([Link](#). Last consulted: 13.08.2022).

### Just Transition Region - Moravskoslezský

The Moravskoslezský Kraj, in the North-Eastern border of Czechia with Poland, is the single biggest coal mining area in the country, with three mines giving work to 10.000 miners and supporting around 4.000 indirect jobs. The public consultations for the local TJTP were led by the regional authorities of the Moravskoslezský Kraj. The format they adopted was almost identical to the public consultations carried out at the national level. The Kraj created a Regional Conference with thematic working groups of multiple stakeholders, and organised online meetings with the participants to present the envisaged content of the TJTP and gather feedback.

**Youth representatives from the local universities were recruited to join the local working groups.** We managed to interview one of them, a student who joined the group in May 2021. Their impression of this format was similar to the one of our interviewees at the national level. Although the meetings were always chaired either by the President of the Kraj or one of their Deputies, the chances for interaction were minimal. Participants were provided with the drafts of the TJTP before the meeting and were allowed to present feedback during the meeting itself. In the eyes of our interviewee, this format did not facilitate input. In their opinion, despite the meetings being well prepared in theory, they fell short of ensuring engagement in practice.

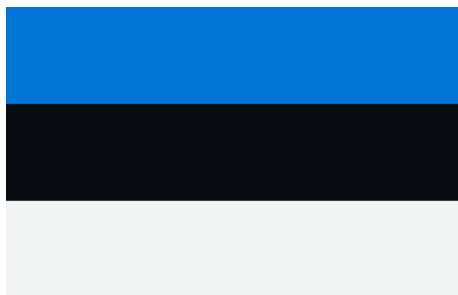
**Besides the inclusion in the working group, the authorities of Moravskoslezský organised a number activities involving youth and the President of the Kraj.** According to a regional civil servant who contacted us, such activities included school visits already in 2019, a **specific virtual meeting for university students** on 11 May 2021,<sup>28</sup> and a **dialogue with young entrepreneurs** on 04 May 2022 co-organised with the Committee of the Regions of the EU.<sup>29</sup> We could verify all of these activities, and our interviewee took part in the event with university students. Their opinion is that it did offer a chance for students, especially expatriates, to talk about how to make the region more attractive, but the follow up to such input was not clear.

**Overall, although it is not clear from the TJTPs how the input of youth was used, the authorities of Moravskoslezský did create several spaces for youth to reach out to the top level of regional politics.**

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28. Hrajemskrajem (2021). Studenti se zapojili do debaty o transformaci kraje ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).

29. CoR (2022) Youth for the Just Transition in Moravian-Silesian region. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).



# Estonia

## Just Transition Region - Ida-Viru

The County of **Ida-Viru** is the only region targeted by the Just Transition Mechanism in Estonia. Located on the border with Russia, it is the main centre of shale oil production in the Baltic state, generating some 75% of Estonia's energy production and 69% of its greenhouse gas emissions. 20.000 jobs are estimated to be connected to the shale oil sector in the region.<sup>30</sup>



Shale oil plant. Ida-Viru County. ©Jaak Nilson Photostock

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30. EU (2020). COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Country Report Estonia 2020. SWD/2020/505 final.





The TJTP of Ida-Viru is managed by the national Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication, which has been developing it throughout 2021 and the beginning of 2022. Across the process, the Ministry has regularly consulted policy makers, businesses and NGOs through a national steering committee in Tallinn, a local one in Ida-Viru, and a final round of consultations in October-November 2021.<sup>31</sup>

Concerning the engagement of youth, ahead of the final round of consultations the Ministry was approached by the NGO Rohetiiger to organise a citizens assembly of randomly selected local young people and provide feedback to the draft TJTP. According to our interviewee from the organisation, Rohetiiger is a national NGO that regularly organises citizen assemblies on a variety of policy issues. In the context of a call for funds focused on youth, **they decided to use their format to allow young people from Ida-Viru to provide feedback to the TJTP.**

Out of a random sample of 3000 local youths aged 16-29, Rohetiiger selected 33 people and organised some online workshops with them where experts introduced them to the TJTP and stimulated the discussion to come back with feedback. Since over 70% of the County's population are native Russian speakers, the assembly has linguistic facilities for both Estonian and Russian speakers.

**The main outcome of the citizen assembly were 26 feedback proposals on the draft of the TJTP**, mostly concerning environmental restoration and public amenities (parks, green areas etc.). The proposals were presented by a delegation of the participants to Minister Jaak Aab during a visit to Ida-Viru and later to the President of the Republic of Estonia.<sup>32</sup>

Later in March 2022, **some participants founded a follow-up NGO**, called People With Purpose (PWP) Liit, to monitor the future uptaking of the proposals in the TJTP and keep youth mobilised in the local just transition.<sup>33</sup>

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31. CEE Bankwatch Network (2021). Status of the Territorial Just Transition Plans in central and eastern Europe. Bankwatch:Prague.

32. Eesti Päevaleht (2022). Ida-Virumaa kliimakogu noored juhtisid riigile üleantud ettepanekutes enim tähelepanu haridusele ja tööturule, ent peavad kliimakogu suurimaks saavutuseks oma hääle leidmist. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022)

33. See PWP Liit profile on Facebook: [://www.facebook.com/People-With-Purpose-PWP-Liit-100547475919569](https://www.facebook.com/People-With-Purpose-PWP-Liit-100547475919569)

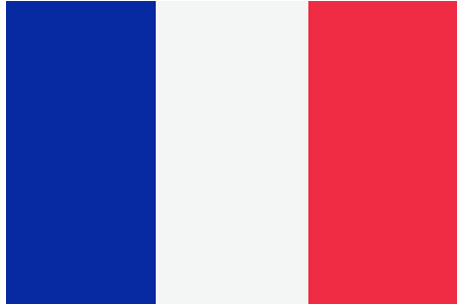
In April 2022, the national Ministry published the TJTP of Ida-Viru.<sup>34</sup> According to our interviewees from PWP Liit, the **Ministry shared a follow-up report to the 26 proposals**. The report contained feedback on which proposals could be included in the TJTP and which could not, with a detailed assessment for each decision.

Later in Summer 2022, **members of PWP Liit were invited to join the Monitoring Committee** set up by the Ministry to monitor the implementation of European cohesion funds, including the JTM, in Ida-Viru.

**Overall, from the information we have we can assess that the case of Ida-Viru appears to be an excellent model of meaningful youth engagement.** Youth engagement has been constant, it has touched upon the concrete content of the TJTP, it has accounted for minorities and it has been followed by concrete follow up on the part of the Estonian authorities. The fact we already received information that youth will be part of the monitoring committee seems already a good sign that such engagement will proceed also in the implementation of the TJTP.

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34. Rahandusministeerium (2022). Õiglase ülemineku territoriaalne kava. ([Link](#), Last consulted: 31.09.2022).



## France

The Just Transition in France was initially proposed by the European Commission to focus on the departments (local circumscriptions) of **Bouches-du-Rhône**, in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur (PAC) Region, and **Nord**, in the Hauts-de-France Region. The two areas have a high concentration of energy-intensive industries, particularly chemical and steel plants, making them the most emissions-intensive parts of the country while providing for over 153.000 local jobs.<sup>35</sup>

According to the National Recovery and Resilience Plan,<sup>36</sup> the French TJTPs are coordinated by the National Agency for Territorial Cohesion (ANCT) of the French Government with support from the consultancy firm Technopolis and the authorities from the administrative regions where the targeted departments are located. On top of the two departments identified by the Commission, the French government decided to write four extra TJTPs for eight departments<sup>37</sup> located in the regions of Normandy, Pays de la Loire, Grand Est and Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes. As a result, six TJTPs are being developed in France. Their implementation will be managed by the Regions when it comes to investments (70% of all funding from the JTF), and by the Ministry of Work when it comes to reskilling and upskilling projects (30%). As of September 2022, the French TJTPs are under negotiation with the European Commission.

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35. EU (2020). COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Country Report France 2020. SWD/2020/509 final.

36. French Government (2021). National Plan of Recovery and Resiliency ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).

37. Seine Maritime, Loire Atlantique, Moselle, Meurthe et Moselle, Pas de Calais, Isère, Haut Rhin and Rhône.

## Just Transition Region - Bouches-du-Rhône

The Bouches-du-Rhône department, located in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (PAC) region of Southern France, hosts several petrochemical and steel industries, with tens of thousands of job places depending on them.<sup>38</sup>

The TJTP for the department is managed by the PAC Region. The Region first presented the JTM to the public in November 2020 to gather feedback and project proposals, and then elaborated the TJTP throughout 2021. Two working groups with representatives of the local and national authorities were set up, and non-institutional stakeholders were consulted via bilateral meetings.<sup>39</sup> Most of the reported consultations are internal to the bodies of the Region, and **no list of the consulted stakeholders has been revealed, so that it is not possible to know if youth representatives were involved in the consultations.** A final public consultation was carried out between 7 December 2021 and 4 January 2022 by making the draft TJTP and the accompanying assessments available on the website of the region. According to the final report on the consultation, no contribution was received from the public.<sup>40</sup>

The Bouche-du-Rhone Department has also got its own Youth Council, which apparently was not involved in the making of the TJTP. **Overall, from our sources it is not possible to clearly confirm if youth was engaged in the writing of the TJTP of Bouches-du-Rhône.**

Regarding the monitoring of the implementation phase, the disclosed draft of the TJTP states that the committee that monitors all European funds implemented in the region should be in charge of the TJTP as well. and the same partners that were involved in the writing should be involved in monitoring. Thus, **civil society in general, including youth, is not supposed to be represented in the Monitoring Committee.** As of September 2022, the TJTP has not been approved yet by the European Commission.

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38. Maregionsud.fr (2022). Fond Transition Juste. Processus d'élaboration. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 11.09.2022).

39. PAC Region (2021). Just Transition Plan Model. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 11.09.2022).

40. PAC Region (2022). Plan de Transition Juste de la Région Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur 2021-2027 - Synthèse de la consultation du public. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 11.09.2022).

## Just Transition Region - Nord & Pas de Calais

The Nord and Pas-de-Calais Departments, located in the Hauts-de-France Region in Northern France, are home to several electro-intensive industries in the sectors of metallurgy, chemical and petrochemical production. In its disclosed TJTP,<sup>41</sup> the Region estimates that around 63 000 people are directly employed by such industries.

The TJTP for the two departments was managed by the Hauts-de-France Region.<sup>42</sup> Initially, the Commission only included the Nord Department in the just transition, but the TJTP geographical coverage was extended to the neighbouring Pas de Calais Department. According to the official draft, the Plan was elaborated by the regional authorities throughout 2021 in cooperation with representatives from the industry and trade unions, but no actors from the civil society are mentioned. A public consultation on the resulting Plan was carried out from 1 April 2022 to 1 May 2022 on the website of the Hauts-de-France Region dedicated to European funding.<sup>43</sup> The draft TJTP and the accompanying environmental assessments were published on the website and opened for feedback from the public. **As of September 2022, the results of the consultation remain undisclosed.**

Regarding the monitoring of the TJTP, according to the final draft it will be carried out by a multi-fund Monitoring Committee presided by the Region. The committee will monitor all EU funds in the Region, and is supposed to meet at least once a year to deal with the JTF in particular. The committee is said to include relevant stakeholders, but there is no indication on what stakeholders will be included in particular.

**In conclusion, there is no disclosed information on whether youth has been engaged in the writing of the TJTP of Nord, and there is no clarity on whether it will be engaged in the Monitoring Committee once the TJTP will be approved.**

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41. Region Hauts-de-France (2022). Plan de Transition Juste Hauts De France pour les territoires du Nord et du Pas de Calais. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).

42. Region Hauts-de-France (2022). Concertation sur le Plan Territorial de Transition Juste 2021-2027. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).

43. Region Hauts-de-France (2022). Avis d'ouverture de consultation publique relative au Programme Opérationnel FEDER-FSE+-FTJ Hauts-de-France 2021-2027. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).



## Germany

With most of its energy needs still satisfied by coal, and with the remnants of a considerable coal extraction industry, Germany is the second major recipient of funding from the Just Transition Mechanism. It is set to receive €2.5 billion from the JTF alone, accounting for 13% of the total capital of the fund.<sup>44</sup> In 2020, Germany decided to phase out coal production and consumption by 2038.<sup>45</sup> To achieve its goal, the federal government plans to support the transition in the coal regions through the investment regulation which is part of its dedicated Structural Strengthening Law. The first pillar of this support for economic diversification projects provides €14 billion for coal areas until 2038. The second pillar supports measures and projects on the federal level with another €26 billion for the affected regions until 2038.<sup>46</sup> The funding from the JTM comes as an additional support to coal regions, but Germany is probably the only country in this report where national investments on a just transition overshadow those coming from the EU.

The intervention of the JTM focuses on the three territories (German: “Revier”) where most workers employed in the coal industry are still concentrated. These three just transition regions do not coincide with a specific administrative division, and two of them span the territory of two federal states each. These territories are the **Lausitzer Revier**, spanning the

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44. EU (2020). COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Country Report Germany 2020. SWD/2020/504 final.

45. German Bundestag (2020). Kohleausstiegsgesetz ([Link](#). Last consulted: 15.09.2022).

46. German Ministry of the Economy and Energy (2022) Kohleausstieg und Strukturwandel ([Link](#). Last consulted: 16.09.2022)

Eastern federal states of Brandenburg and Saxony, the **Mitteldeutsches Revier**, spanning Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt, and the **Rheinisches Revier**, located in the Western federal state of North-Rhine Westphalia (NRW).

The TJTPs of the three territories are coordinated by the Federal Ministry for Economy & Climate Protection, and written by the federal states where the target coal regions are located. In the context of the national strategy for cohesion policy 2021-27, the JTF is planned to be implemented through five multi-fund Operational Programmes associated with two other EU funds: the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund Plus.<sup>47</sup> Each federal state has written and published TJTPs for the areas of the Reviers located in their respective territory. Brandenburg, NRW and Sachsen have decided to include new areas in their TJTPs. The final drafts have all been published.<sup>48</sup> As of September 2022, the TJTPs of North-Rhein Westphalia have already been approved (approval came on 28 June),<sup>49</sup> while those of the remaining two territories are still under writing or evaluation.

**When it comes to partnerships, since our last report much information has been disclosed through the publication of TJTPs and other relevant reports.** The consultations with relevant stakeholders reported in the TJTPs are extremely similar across the whole country. They took place mostly in the second half of 2021, and they consisted in bilateral talks with selected stakeholders and bigger online events reuniting a variety of stakeholders. Bilateral talks usually targeted businesses, trade unions and local authorities. The bigger events reportedly gathered businesses, trade unions, local authorities, EU representatives, universities and civil society organisations. The participants to such events were then invited to join the Monitoring Committee to be further involved in the monitoring phase.

**To gather the input of youth, a special joint event was organised in November 2021.** In the context of the federal youth strategy, the four federal states where the coal areas are located

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47. German Government (2022). EU-Kohäsions- und Strukturpolitik. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 14.09.2022).

48. See the TJTPs of:

- Brandenburg: Dokumente zur Förderperiode 2021-2027. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022)
- NRW: Multi Funds Programme ERDF/JTF North Rhine-Westphalia 2021-2027 ([Link](#). Last consulted: 19.09.2022).
- Saxony: Förderzeitraum 2021 – 2027 ([Link](#). Last consulted: 03.10.2022).
- Saxony-Anhalt: Förderperiode 2021 bis 2027 EFRE, ESF+ und JTF. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 03.10.2022).

49. efre.nrw.de (2022). EFRE/JTF-Programm Nordrhein-Westfalen 2021-2027. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 03.10.2022).

organised an online workshop (or "planathon") which took place from 12-14 November 2021.<sup>50</sup> During the event, over 40 young people aged 16-27 from the coal regions of Germany came together to discuss how youth could be involved in the just transition. The input from the event was summarised and published as a report including several practical proposals for actions, projects and future youth engagement activities.<sup>51</sup> The report was then presented by the youth representatives who contributed to it to their respective local politicians.<sup>52</sup>

Despite its potential, **the youth event and its resulting report were not mentioned in any disclosed TJTP.** Besides, since the members of the Monitoring Committees have been selected among the participants to the TJTP-specific events, having a separate activity for youth might have excluded them from such Committees. As a result, **it is not clear if the input of youth has been taken up in the TJTPs, and the TJTPs do not clarify if youth representatives will sit in the Monitoring Committees.** Further research and interviews with participants will be needed to better clarify how meaningful youth engagement is in Germany.



Presentation of the youth report to politicians from the Brandenburg federal state on 21 July 2022 . ©Brandenburg Government

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50. Jugend Politik Beratung (2022). Planathon "Jugend gestaltet Strukturwandel. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022)

51. Jugend Politik Beratung (2022). Jugend gestaltet Strukturwandel. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).

52. Land Brandenburg. Frischer Wind für Strukturentwicklung: Jugendliche erarbeiten Ideen für Zukunft der Kohlereviere. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).





## Greece

**Greece committed to phase out all electricity production from brown coal by 2028.**<sup>53</sup> The phase out drew the focus of the Just Transition Mechanism to the two main brown coal mining territories in the country: **Western Macedonia** and **Megalopolis**. In Western Macedonia, the coal industry is estimated to account for one third of the local GDP, with 5.500 direct jobs and the entire local economy relying on coal for income and heating. Megalopolis is much smaller in size, but out of a population of around 6.000 inhabitants, 1.600 jobs are connected to the coal industry. On top of these two regions, the Commission also flagged the **Aegean islands and Crete** as focus areas, as they rely on oil and diesel for their energy needs.<sup>54</sup>

In the Greek government, the Ministry of Development is in charge of the just transition. The Ministry prepared a national Just Transition Plan for all the three eligible regions. **The Greek Plan was the first one to be officially approved by the European Commission in June 2022.**<sup>55</sup> The consultations for the plan took place between 2020-2021, and they were structured around a national working group and some local ones. No youth representatives were involved at that stage. However, **the Ministry responded well to the mobilisation of local youth, and youth representatives will be represented in the monitoring committee**, where one youth association from Western Macedonia was invited to join with full right to vote.

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53. Greek Ministry of the Environment and Energy (2019). National Energy and Climate Plan. Athens: 2019.

54. EU (2020). COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Country Report Greece 2020. SWD/2020/507 final.

55. European Commission (2022). EU Cohesion Policy: €1.63 billion for a just climate and energy transition in Greece ([Link](#). Last consulted: 01.09.2022).

## Just Transition Region - Western Macedonia

Located in the North of Greece and spanning the administrative region of the same name, Western Macedonia is the biggest brown coal area in Greece. Over 75% of Greek energy comes from the coal mines and the coal-fired plants the region hosts. Because of this, Western Macedonia will be the main focus of the JTM in Greece, receiving 63% of the JTF allocation.

The consultations for the TJTP were carried out through a regional working group to consult stakeholders such as businesses, trade unions and local universities. **At its inception, young people were not involved, unless they belonged to another stakeholder group.** During an event in May 2022, a representative of the local development agency reported that engaging stakeholders was particularly complicated, especially when it came to make them understand the synergies between each other's activities.<sup>56</sup>

For the TJTP, the local association **Active Youths of Florina**, in cooperation with the local Europe Direct office, organised an online roundtable around February 2020 with 30 youth from the main cities of the region to discuss input for the TJTP in the context of an Erasmus+ project. They created a 4 pages document suggesting how youth could be included in the TJTP writing, coupled with some proposals for the TJTP itself.

According to our two interviewees from the association, the Greek government and the national just transition working group understood the value of the document, and around June 2020 organised a call between a representative from the national working group and the youth who drafted the document. In the call, the discussion remained quite general, as youth did not have very specific proposals for the TJTP.

After the call, Active Youths of Florina kept in touch with the Ministry and was regularly invited to events related to the just transition at the national and European level. According to our interviewees, the relationship with local authorities remained

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56. Intervention of Dimitris Ziouzios (Regional Development Fund of Western Macedonia) at the CINTRAN event "Territorial Just Transition Plans, in Process and in Practice". 19 May 2022 ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).

less regular. The association tried to reach out to the local authorities, but got little response compared to the Ministry.

One last remarkable event where youth was involved was the **visit of the European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms Elisa Ferreira** in November 2021. Commissioner Ferreira visited Kozani, administrative capital of Western Macedonia. Among the events in the agenda, the local Europe Direct organised a meeting with 30 local young people from Active Youths of Florina to have a face-to-face discussion with the Commissioner, her cabinet, and the Governor of Western Macedonia. The event left a positive impression to our interviewees.



Pictures from the event with with Commissioner Ferreira. ©Europe Direct

Following the approval of the Greek TJTPs, in September 2022 **Active Youth of Florina was invited to join the monitoring committee of the national just transition plan with full voting rights.** According to our interviewees, it is the only youth association to have joined the committee.

**Overall, despite the initial absence of specific youth engagement activities, the efforts of local activists have made youth engagement in Western Macedonia increasingly regular and meaningful.** The authorities actively responded to the self-mobilisation of youth powered by the local Europe Direct office and were ready to fill the lack of youth representation.



## Hungary

The just transition in Hungary was indicated by the Commission to focus on the fossil fuel-intensive counties of **Heves** and **Baranya**. Heves County is home to coal mines serving a major power plant that is responsible for 50% of the Hungarian emissions coming from energy. As the Hungarian government decided to phase out coal by 2025, over 2.500 jobs are at risk in Heves. Baranya County is home to several electro-intensive industries, particularly cement plants, which might lose several job places on the path to decarbonisation.<sup>57</sup>

The Hungarian TJTPs were written by the Ministry of Innovation and Technology as an annex to the national Environmental and Energy Efficiency Operational Programme Plus (EEOP+). Following the elections in May 2022, the management of the TJTPs has passed to the Ministry of Technology and Industry. Besides the two TJTPs for the counties of Heves and Baranya, the Ministry decided to write an extra TJTP targeting the coal mining county of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén (BAZ), bordering Heves. The Ministry is supported by the consultancy firm KPMG, which has been in charge of basic research and stakeholder engagement. The first draft of the TJTPs was submitted to the European Commission in August 2021.

**On 18 September 2022, the European Commission has proposed to suspend the approval of the EEOP+, and the TJTPs with it, as part of its measures to protect the EU budget from breaches of the rule of law in Hungary.**<sup>58</sup> Should this proposal be approved by the Council of the EU, it could put a halt to the implementation of the JTM in Hungary unless the suspension is lifted. As of the publishing date of this report, such a decision is not yet effective.

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57. EU (2020). COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Country Report Hungary 2020. SWD/2020/507 final

58. EU (2022) Proposal for a COUNCIL IMPLEMENTING DECISION on measures for the protection of the Union budget against breaches of the principles of the rule of law in Hungary. EU:Brussels.

When the TJTPs were under writing, the partnership with stakeholders was managed by KPMG from late 2020 to early 2021 by carrying out bilateral interviews and organising a dedicated forum in each of the three targeted counties. New stakeholders to involve were identified by asking the participants who attended the interviews and the fora, so that the network of engaged stakeholders gradually increased. The attendants of the fora could discuss and provide input to the TJTP of their respective county through interactive formats. The process was concluded with a fourth and final forum for all three TJTPs where participants could vote on the final input. Following that, from May to June 2021 the Ministry opened the draft text of the TJTPs for feedback on its website, before submitting the final draft in August 2021. No final report of the consultation process has been disclosed by the Ministry. **The drafts of the TJTPs are publicly available online.**<sup>59</sup>

According to the draft TJTPs, young people were considered a hard-to-reach group that the authorities strove to include. In the end, **youth associations and university students were involved both in the bilateral interviews and the fora organised by the consultant across all the three target counties.** We asked for more information to a local official who oversaw the consultations in the Northern counties of Heves and BAZ. According to the official, the engagement of youth was often limited to university students, and was not particularly successful in terms of attendance. Since there is not a final report on the consultations of the consultant, it is not possible to confirm such information. No youth representatives who took part in the consultations could be found to be interviewed.

**In terms of future engagement, the draft TJTPs do not provide for specific Monitoring Committees.** In all the three drafts, several governmental agencies and bodies are indicated as being in charge of monitoring the EEOS+ as a whole. Non-governmental stakeholders will be consulted, but it is not specified how.

Overall, **it is positive that the Hungarian authorities considered youth a stakeholder that needed to be reached, and according to their reports they were reached.** However, more research is needed to interview participants and assess if the process was meaningful.

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59. Palyazat.gov.hu (2022). KÖRNYEZETI ÉS ENERGIAHATÉKONYSÁGI OPERATÍV PROGRAM PLUSZ (KEHOP PLUSZ). ([Link](#). Last consulted: 24.09.2022).



## Ireland

The only area to be included in the just transition in the Republic of Ireland is the **Midlands** region, in the centre of the island, spanning the Counties of Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath. The local economy strongly relies on the production and use of peat to produce electricity, with around 4.000 jobs connected to the sector.<sup>60</sup>

Ireland launched a National Just Transition Fund for the Midlands worth €11 million already in 2019.<sup>61</sup> The JTF will bring €84 million more to the region alongside the national programme.

The TJTP for the Midlands was drafted throughout 2021 and early 2022 by DECC, the Department of Environment, Climate and Communication of the Irish Government, with support



Peat mine field in the Irish Midlands. ©geograph

60. EU (2020). COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Country Report Ireland 2020. SWD/2020/506 final

61. Irish Government (2022). National Just Transition Fund. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).

from the consultancies AARC Ltd and EnvEcon.<sup>62</sup> Besides the four counties identified by the Commission, the Irish government proposed to extend the TJTP to the counties of East Galway, North Tipperary, West Kildare and Roscommon. The funding of the JTF is expected to be managed by the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA).<sup>63</sup>

Ireland started an extensive partnership with relevant stakeholders already when running its National Just Transition Fund in 2020. The government adopted formats such as workshops, research reports and a major conference in October 2020. There was a wide variety of engaged stakeholders, including the National Youth Council (NYCI), which presented its own Youth Manifesto for Climate Justice during the conference.<sup>64</sup>

Building on this experience, an extensive public consultation on the final draft of the TJTP was carried out from December 2021 to February 2022 through online surveys and three online workshops. The results and the input received are available on the website of the Ministry.<sup>65</sup>

**One of the workshops was specifically dedicated to young people aged 16-24.** It took place on 10 February 2022, and was attended by 14 participants joining either as individuals or on behalf of local youth associations from the eight targeted counties. The final report of the consultation process relates that the workshop offered youth the possibility to provide input on jobs, education and their hopes for local development from the JTF.<sup>66</sup> We could not arrange an interview with any of the participants to get their own impressions though. Overall, the Irish consultations have been quite transparent and well documented. However, as of September 2022 **no follow up materials have been disclosed on how the input from the consultations, including the one with youth, have informed the final text of the TJTP.**

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62. Irish Government (2022). EU Reports to Inform Ireland's Territorial Just Transition Plans. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).

63. Irish Government (2022). Public Consultation on the EU Just Transition Fund. Frequently Asked Questions. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).

64. National Economic & Social Council (2020). Delivering a Just Transition for All. 28th EEAC Annual Conference. Irish Government: Dublin.

65. Government of Ireland (2022). Public Consultation on the EU Just Transition Fund. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).

66. Government of Ireland (2022). Public Consultation on the EU Just Transition Fund in Ireland: Final report. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).



## Italy

The just transition in Italy is focused on the energy intensive industries of the Southern city of **Taranto** and the last coal mining area in the country in the south of the island of **Sardinia**.<sup>67</sup>

The preparation of the TJTPs for the two regions is managed by the Department for Territorial Cohesion of the Presidency of the Italian Government, with support from the consultancy PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and project input from the regional and municipal authorities of the two areas. PwC carried out the preliminary work to inform the writing of the TJTPs between March and May 2021,<sup>68</sup> and since then the Italian government was supposed to work on the final drafts. As of September 2022, the two TJTPs are under evaluation. The Italian government has not published any drafts or reports concerning the two Plans.

When it comes to consultations with local stakeholders, they were mostly managed by PwC, which carried out interviews with local policy makers, business representatives and trade unions from the two regions. Civil society representatives were not targeted as potential interlocutors. From the side of public authorities, an online call for proposals was carried out by the Ministry for the South and Territorial Cohesion of the national government in the first half of 2021. The call collected 68 proposals, almost entirely (49) from businesses, with 10 from local authorities and 9 from trade unions and NGOs. It was not disclosed if any reply came from youth associations.<sup>69</sup>

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67. EU (2020). COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Country Report Italy 2020. SWD/2020/511 final

68. PwC (2021). Just Transition in Italy. Meeting with institutions on 15.01.2021. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).

69. Ministry for the South. Manifestazione di interesse per il Just Transition Fund. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022)



## Just Transition Region - Taranto, Puglia

The city of Taranto, in the Southern Italian region of Puglia, houses the biggest steel mill in Europe, generating extreme levels of pollution while accounting for around 20.000 direct and indirect jobs in a city of 200.000.



Taranto's steel mill @tripadvisor.it

During the preliminary work, PwC consulted stakeholders through bilateral meetings with selected local policy makers, businesses, trade unions and academics. The consultation took place in May 2021, and it aimed to identify the main areas of action for the just transition and gather ideas for projects. The outcome was presented in September 2021.<sup>70</sup>

In June 2021, the Apulian regional authorities launched on their website their own public call for projects, open to all users. By the closing of the call in December 2021, two projects were presented by local NGOs.<sup>71</sup> Our local interviewee from an environmental NGO confirms that neither the regional nor the municipal authorities did properly reach out to the local NGOs to advertise and support in this call for projects. **Since the civil society in general was not engaged in the writing of the TJTPs, the same inevitably goes for youth.**

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70. PwC (2021). Just Transition Fund. Il contributo del fondo sul territorio della Provincia di Taranto. Workshop 27 September 2021. (Source no more publicly accessible as of September 2022).

71. Puglia Partecipa (2022). Just Transition Fund -Taranto. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.09.2022).

### Just Transition Region - Sulcis Iglesiente, Sardegna

The area of Sulcis Iglesiente, in the South-West of the island of Sardinia, hosts Italy's last coal mine, with around 350 workers, and performs extremely poorly in terms of quality of life, employment levels and ageing population.

Also in this case, PwC carried out a consultation with local stakeholders between March and April 2021. The actors that were involved represented local authorities, businesses and trade unions. No representative from the civil society, including youth, is mentioned to have been approached. The consultancy reported on the outcome of the consultation in July 2021.<sup>72</sup> Regarding the consultation of the Ministry of the South, 23 of the 68 replies that were received came from actors from Sulcis.

According to our two local interviewees, there was initially some considerable interest with the potential of the just transition among the municipal authorities and civil society of the Sulcis area. The Sardinian regional authorities, however, did not prioritise the collection of projects for the TJTPs. Only after some pressure from local mayors did the Region launch a call for projects in May 2021, with extremely close deadlines for local municipalities to present their projects by July. As a result, most municipalities assembled their projects very quickly in the space of two months and **no public consultation was possible. As a result, youth was not engaged at all** in the making of the TJTP for Sulcis

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72. PwC (2021). Just Transition Fund. Draft Piano d'Azione per il Sulcis Iglesiente. Workshop informativo 08 Luglio 2021. (Source no more publicly accessible as of September 2022).



## Luxembourg

In Luxembourg, the just transition is going to focus on the electro-intensive industries based in **Rumelange** and **Esch-sur-Alzette**, whose plants account for 69% of the country's industrial emissions.<sup>73</sup>

Luxembourg set up the governance of its TJTP around various ministries of the national government. The geographical coverage was extended to the whole South of the country. According to the final draft,<sup>74</sup> the plan was developed internally by various departments of the government throughout 2021. The same departments will form the monitoring committee. As the JTF has been associated with the EU funds FEDER and FSE+, the consultations for those two funds covered the points of the TJTP related to each. In both cases, the related plans mention mostly consultations with governmental actors, and only very vaguely with local authorities, trade unions and civil society actors.<sup>75</sup>

The final draft of the TJTP and accompanying environmental assessment were published on 21 January 2022 on the national EU funding website and opened to **written feedback** from the general public for a period of 45 days. According to the draft TJTP, no input was received from the online consultation. Overall, **not only youth, but the whole civil society seems to have been left out of the consultations** for the Luxemburgish TJTP and the related European funds, and there is no plan for them to be involved in the monitoring phase.

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73. EU (2020). COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Country Report Luxembourg 2020. SWD/2020/515 final.

74. Government of Luxembourg (2022). Project for a Territorial Just Transition Plan for Luxembourg. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).

75. See Government of Luxembourg (2022). "Programme Operationel. Investir dans le futur" ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022). and "Investing in a smarter and greener Europe." ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).



## Netherlands

The just transition in the Netherlands is going to focus on six energy-intensive industrial clusters across the country: **Groningen, IJmond, Groot-Rijnmond, West Noord-Brabant, Zeeuws-Vlaanderen and Zuid-Limburg**.<sup>76</sup> Groningen in particular, with its dependence on natural gas production and over 20.000 jobs at risk from its phasing out, is going to receive €330 million out of the total share of €623 million allocated to the Netherlands by the JTF. However, TJTPs are being developed for all the six areas.<sup>77</sup>

The TJTPs of the Netherlands are coordinated by the national Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate, and developed by the governments of the Provinces where the six industrial clusters are located: Groningen, North Holland, South Holland, North Brabant, Zeeland and Limburg. The Ministry created an overarching national Just Transition Plan that will finance the projects under the six TJTPs.<sup>78</sup> The national and territorial Just Transition Plans were developed throughout 2021, and submitted to the European Commission on 22 March 2022.<sup>79</sup>

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76. EU (2020). COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Country Report Netherlands. 2020.SWD/2020/518 final.

77. Dutch Government (2020). Letter to the States General. Distribution of resources between the Dutch envelopes ERDF and JT. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 11.09.2022).

78. Dutch Government (2022). Submission of partnership agreement and overview and appreciation outcome of negotiations between EU funds under Cohesion Policy. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 11.09.2022).

79. Stimulus (2022). Factsheet. Just Transition Fund. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 11.09.2022).

## Just Transition Region - Groningen

The Province of Groningen, in the North of the Netherlands, is the main focus area of the just transition in the country owing to the heavy reliance of the local economy on the production of natural gas and the presence of energy-intensive industries.

The local TJTP was developed by the Province of Groningen throughout 2021. The Province has a permanent Youth Advisory Council that can be consulted on policy matters. According to our local interviewee, who sits in the Council, the drafts of the TJTP were not submitted to their attention. However, **the youth representatives from the Council were invited to a general public consultation event** with several local stakeholders that took place in September 2021. During the event, the Province officials and several experts exposed to the public the draft TJTP. The stakeholders that attended were asked to provide written feedback after the event.

Given the highly technical content of the proposal, the youth representatives that attended, including our interviewee, did not feel capable of providing any meaningful feedback. The Youth Council was not invited to any follow-up activity or event, and to our interviewee's best knowledge no such activities were held at all. To conclude, **the youth engagement process in Groningen did not adopt a format that facilitate input, and did not fully use the potential of the existing youth representation bodies** present in the region.

The draft of the local TJTP has been published online.<sup>80</sup> However, the disclosed text is missing the section dedicated to the partnerships, so that it is not possible to know what actors have been consulted so far and who will be in the Monitoring Committee in the future.

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80. Provincie Groningen (2022). Just Transition Fund. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 10.09.2022).



## Poland

**As home to more than half of the whole coal mining workforce in the EU**, and with a national energy system strongly reliant on coal, **Poland is the single main recipient of investments from the Just Transition Mechanism**. From the JTF alone, the country has been allocated €3.5 billion in 2021 prices, i.e. 20% of the entire capital of the fund.



Belchatow mine and energy complex, Central Poland  
©Independent.co.uk

The European Commission initially planned to include three Polish coal mining areas in the just transition (**Eastern Wielkopolska, Upper Silesia** and the Wałbrzych District in **Lower Silesia**),<sup>81</sup> but the Polish government has prepared TJTPs for four more in the hope they will also be approved (Lubelskie, Łódzkie, Western Małopolska and the Zgorzelec District of Lower Silesia). As of September 2022, the TJTPs of Lubelskie and Zgorzelec have been dropped, and Western Małopolska has been associated with Upper Silesia.

There are two types of Just Transition Plans in the country: a National Plan developed by the Ministry of Climate and Environment, and local TJTPs coordinated by the Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy. The latter were developed in each of the above-mentioned regions by the Marshal (local governor) through the Local Development Agencies. In the process, all Marshals regularly consulted the local civil society by setting up ad hoc working groups gathering national and local policy makers with businesses, trade unions and, with one exception, NGOs. However, there were some remarkable differences in the way consultations were carried out in each region, both in terms of instruments (meetings, workshops, written submissions) and the type of actors involved.

The final drafts of the Polish TJTPs have been sent to the European Commission in July 2021. As of September 2022, they are still under negotiation, and no plans for the monitoring committees have been revealed yet.

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81. EU (2020). COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Country Report Poland. SWD/2020/520 final.

## Just Transition Region - Eastern Wielkopolska

Eastern Wielkopolska covers the Eastern part of the Voivodeship of Greater Poland around the city of Konin. The region hosts 6.000 people employed in brown coal extraction and electricity production. On top of job losses, the local open-pit mines pose several environmental challenges.

Public consultations for the local TJTP have been extensive and regular. According to our local interviewee, even before the Just Transition Mechanism was announced in late 2019, the transition from coal mining had been a key debate topic in the region, with informative meetings and public debates.

Thus, when it came to consult the civil society on the TJTP, the authorities built on such experience to organise various rounds of consultations throughout 2020 and the first half of 2021. The format was meetings and workshops with a variety of economic, social and non-governmental stakeholders, whose input informed the versions of the draft TJTP. The final draft of the TJTP was submitted to the European Commission in July 2021. It is publicly available online.<sup>82</sup>

Concerning youth engagement, there was initially no specific attempt from the Marshal Office or the Local Development Agency to reach out to young people specifically. However, our interviewee, a representative from the local branch of Fridays for Future, started to regularly attend the public consultation meetings. Eventually, the Development Agency approached his organisation to let them **participate in some meetings of the stakeholder working group** and, in parallel, set up a **committee of young people** to come back with proposals for the TJTP. The committee was held in autumn 2020, and many of its proposals, particularly on education, were eventually included in the final TJTP.

**In the end, the engagement of youth in the drafting of the TJTP in Eastern Wielkopolska proved to be quite meaningful, constant and open to input.** According to our interviewee, both the authorities and other stakeholders, such as miners, gradually opened up to the proposals of youth representatives.

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82. Wielkopolska Voivodeship (2021). TERYTORIALNY PLAN SPRAWIEDLIWEJ TRANSFORMACJI WIELKOPOLSKI WSCHODNEJ. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 03.10.2022).



However, regarding the future of youth engagement, **the final draft submitted to the Commission does not specify any governance mechanism to keep engaging youth in the monitoring phase.** As of September 2022, the draft is still under negotiation, and no monitoring committee has been set up yet. Our interviewee and his organisation remain in touch with local authorities, and their impression is that they will be invited to the Monitoring Committee once one is set up.



A meeting of the youth committee in October 2020.  
Konin, Eastern Wielkopolska. ©Fridays for Future

## Just Transition Region - Upper Silesia

Silesia is by far the biggest coal extraction area in the whole EU bloc. Half of all coal miners in the EU are based in the region, with over 78.000 jobs across 18 mines. Given the massive number of workers involved, the transition is expected by the Commission to require massive investments in both big and small businesses.



Murcki mine, Silesia, Poland ©flickr

The local TJTPs was developed between late 2020 and early 2022. The final draft from July 2022 is available online.<sup>83</sup> The local Marshall Office and Development Agency structured the consultations with stakeholders around multiple rounds. A first round of project collection took place in 2020, and the resulting draft was published online to gather written feedback from the public. For the third round, in summer 2021, the Marshal Office organised meetings with specific categories of actors (businesses, trade unions, NGO etc.).

During the round that took place in February 2022, **the Youth Assembly of the Upper Silesia was also included in the consultations.** We could not interview any of the representatives to gather their view on the process.

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83. Silesian Voivodeship (2022). TERYTORIALNY PLAN SPRAWIEDLIWEJ TRANSFORMACJI WOJEWÓDZTWA ŚLĄSKIEGO 2030. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 03.10.2022).

**On the side, the local NGO Bomiasto**, which is active on urban regeneration projects in the Silesian capital, Katowice, **started its own youth engagement activities**. According to our interviewee from the organisation, Bomiasto was receiving funding for an awareness raising project on urban regeneration. Their format was organising workshops where experts spread knowledge on environmental and social topics to gather input from citizens. In the context of such activities, **Bomiasto gathered around 30 Silesian NGOs, including youth associations, to hold a workshop where they could get to know more about the JTM and provide their input**. The workshop came up with a document of proposals on climate mitigation measures needed for Silesia, and Bomiasto made it public through its media channels. Some officials from the local authorities reacted to the document, but no meeting with Bomiasto and the participants of the workshop was organised.

With regards to monitoring and implementation, the final draft of the TJTP indicates the Board of the Silesian Voivodship as the responsible body. **Civil society organisations should be involved in the monitoring process, but there is no specific mention of youth organisations**. As of September 2022, the TJTP is still under negotiation.

### **Just Transition Region - Wałbrzych District, Lower Silesia**

Like the rest of Silesia, the economy of Lower Silesia used to be based on coal extraction, but an unfinished transition away from coal has left the region with above-average levels of unemployment, poverty and pollution.

As of September 2022, the final draft of the TJTP has been published,<sup>84</sup> and is still under evaluation. In terms of partnerships, the draft mentions a working groups with 72 representatives from authorities and civil society. **The TJTP does not mention any youth engagement initiatives and does not provide for the engagement of youth representatives in the monitoring phase**. According to a written response we received from the municipality of Wałbrzych, the local authorities tried to reach out to youth, but they did not manage to involve any youth representative.

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84. Lower Silesian Voivodeship (2022). TERYTORIALNY PLAN SPRAWIEDLIWEJ TRANSFORMACJI DLA WOJEWÓDZTWA DOLNOŚLĄSKIEGO 2021-2030 SUBREGION WAŁBRZYSKI. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 03.10.2022).



## Romania

In Romania, the JTM is going to support six counties across the country: **Hunedoara, Gorj, Dolj, Galați, Prahova and Mureș**. Hunedoara and Gorj host the main coal areas of Romania, employing over 28.600 people in mining and electricity production while accounting for over 30% of the total Romanian emissions. The other four counties host the main energy-intensive industries in the country (chemicals, metals, fertilisers etc.), accounting for 35% of total emissions.<sup>85</sup>

The six Romanian TJTPs, one per county, are coordinated by the national Ministry of Investments and European Projects, with technical assistance from the Frankfurt School of Management and Finance. The Ministry decided to prepare an overarching national Just Transition Programme that finances the projects of the six TJTPs. These latter are written in coordination with the local Regional Development Agencies and County Councils of the six targeted counties. The Just Transition Programme was submitted to the Commission on 15 July 2022, and as of September 2022 its approval is still pending.

The partnership with the relevant stakeholders is managed through a national working group and six local working groups set up in each of the target counties since October 2020. Each working group gathers representatives of the national government, local authorities, businesses, trade unions and academia. Some of them also include environmental and social NGOs. **No working group currently includes youth organisations or youth representatives.**

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85. EU (2020). COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Country Report Romania. SWD/2020/522 final.

In the first half of 2021 the consultant of the government also carried out some bilateral consultations with stakeholders, mostly businesses and trade unions. **Youth organisations were not approached for such meetings**, and no joint meetings gathering more stakeholders at the same time were organised.

In April 2021, the consultant published a report on the state of the partnerships with stakeholders for the just transition process.<sup>86</sup> Their main findings were that there were several flaws in their functioning of the local working groups, from the way they were organised to the number and type of partners included, and the lack of expertise on development planning. The consultant found remarkable differences from county to county in the advancement of the work and in the number and type of members of each working group. The consultant's advice was to contain the number of participants in order to facilitate the work while opening up to new stakeholders, particularly NGOs, and making the whole output of the working groups transparent and accessible to the general public. Moreover, the consultant created a matrix of



Coal facilities in the Jiu Valley, Hunedoara. ©Viktor Macha

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86. Frankfurt School (2021). Report on Proposal for a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy. MIEP: Bucharest.

over 290 stakeholders to facilitate the future engagement activities of the government. Youth associations were included in the matrix, with a recommendation to engage them in the future partnerships.<sup>87</sup>

After the publication of the report, the Ministry of Investments proceeded with finalising the TJTPs and submitted them to the European Commission on 26 July 2021.<sup>88</sup> In April 2022, the six drafts of the TJTPs were published online, and opened for written feedback from users until 10 May 2022.<sup>89</sup> No further public consultation or reform of the working groups was done in the meantime, so that **youth has remained unrepresented in the writing of the six Romanian TJTPs.**

Concerning the upcoming monitoring of the implementation, the final drafts of the TJTPs provide that the same working groups that contributed to the writing of TJTPs will act as monitoring committees. **Only one draft TJTP, notably the one from Hunedoara, mentions the intention to open up the membership of the monitoring committees to interested youth.** The others mention NGOs and civil society representatives, but provide no details on what groups they represent. Since the membership of monitoring committees is not going to change, we can expect that **youth representatives risk to remain excluded from the monitoring phase as they were during the writing of TJTPs.**

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87. Frankfurt School (2021). Report on Proposal for a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy. MIEP: Bucharest.

88. MIEP (2022). Mecanismul pentru o Tranziție Justă. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).

89. Fonduri-Structurale.ro (2022). 2021-2027: Planurile Teritoriale pentru Tranziție Justă aferente județelor Gorj, Hunedoara, Dolj, Mureș, Prahova și Galați, în consultare publică. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).



## Slovakia

As Slovakia has committed to a complete coal phase-out by 2030, the JTM is supposed to focus on the last coal mining region of **Horná Nitra**, in the Kraj (administrative region) of Trenčín, and the energy-intensive region of **Košice Kraj**.<sup>90</sup> The coal mines of Horná Nitra support around 4000 direct jobs and 1000 indirect jobs. Košice hosts the last coal plant in Slovakia and several energy-intensive industries, particularly a major steel plant with almost 12.000 workers.

The Slovak just transition is coordinated by the Ministry of Investment, Regional Development and Informatisation, with support from the consultancy firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). The Ministry has written a national Just Transition Plan covering Trenčín, Košice and, additionally, Banskobystrický Kraj. A national group of experts is in charge of the writing. The group is formed by officials from several ministries of the national government, consultants, energy experts, scientists, business representatives and former coal plants managers. Their work started in December 2020, and the final draft of the TJTP was submitted on 08 June 2022. The draft is accessible online on the website of the Ministry.<sup>91</sup>

The engagement of stakeholders was managed by the national Ministry, with contributions from the consultant. On top of the national experts group, the Ministry created two local working groups for Horná Nitra and Košice. The working groups were reportedly quite participatory and open to input. They met once a month throughout 2021, and welcomed in-

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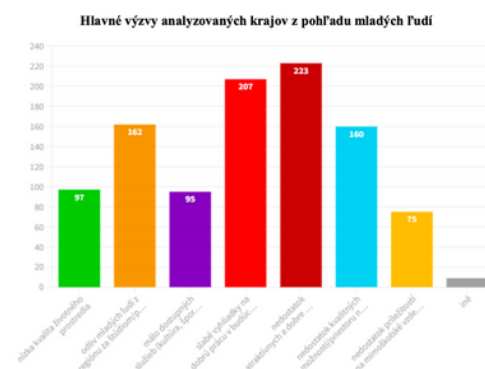
90. EU (2020). COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Country Report Slovakia. SWD/2020/524 final

91. Slovak Government (2022). Plán spravodlivej transformácie. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 02.10.2022).

puts from stakeholders of all sorts, including NGOs and civil society representatives. Alongside working groups, the Ministry organised or participated in dedicated workshops throughout 2021. Most of these workshops targeted specific stakeholder groups, and they were structured to collect their input for the Just Transition Plan. Finally, PwC also facilitated stakeholder engagement by organising trilateral meetings with government officials and selected stakeholders to discuss specific issues.

**Concerning youth engagement, the main activities indicated by the draft of the Just Transition Plan are dedicated workshops and a national online survey.** The workshops took place in Spring 2021 in the three targeted Kraj. In each workshop, a panel of officials from the Ministry and the working group could discuss together with representatives of secondary and tertiary students the main issues of local young people and their input to the Just Transition Plan. In the workshop of the region of Horná Nitra, the discussion was informed by a local survey conducted by two students from the territory.<sup>92</sup> The Just Transition Plan also reports that a national survey was conducted with students, and it gathered 360 individual responses. The survey dealt with the future prospects students saw in their territory, and the main features their territory should have to remain attractive to them.

**Regarding future engagement, the final draft of the Just Transition Plan says youth will remain engaged in monitoring through informal Monitoring Committees and seminars.** The authorities will cooperate with local youth associations to form these committees and organise together information sections for local youth.



Visualisation of the results of the youth survey features in the Just Transition Plan. ©Slovak Government

In summary, from the disclosed information **youth seems to have been engaged quite meaningfully in the writing of the Slovak Just Transition Plan**, with a variety of opportunities to provide input. We still need to collect interviews with local participants to get their point of view on these processes. However, regarding future engagement, **it is not clear why youth will only have an informal role in the monitoring of the just transition.** This could potentially put the input of youth in a secondary position to other stakeholders.

92. Magdolenová, J. & Balková, M. (2021). Listen to the young when planning for just transition, say Slovakian students. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 10.09.2022).





## Spain

Spain has fourteen operative coal-fired energy plants supporting 3.300 direct and 10.000 indirect jobs. It is the only Member State of the EU with a national Just Transition Strategy, launched in 2019, and it closed down its last coal mines already in 2018.<sup>93</sup> The JTF in Spain is going to complement the national strategy in the eight areas where the coal plants and the former coal mines are located across the country: **Asturias, León and Palencia** (Castilla y León), **A Coruña** (Galicia), **Cádiz, Córdoba and Almería** (Andalusia), and **Teruel** (Aragon).<sup>94</sup>

A single national Just Transition Programme was elaborated by the Institute for the Just Transition of the national Ministry of Ecological Transition.<sup>95</sup> The partnership to gather the input of relevant stakeholders for the TJTP is structured around nineteen local working groups called Just Transition Covenants. Managed by the local municipalities of the areas targeted by the just transition, each local working group organises workshops, calls for proposals and surveys with local authorities, businesses, trade unions and NGOs. **No working group managed to include youth associations or representatives.** On top of the regions identified by the Commission, the Ministry decided to launch Covenants also in the areas of Zorita, in Castilla-La-Mancha, and Alcudia in the Balearic Islands.<sup>96</sup>

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93. Instituto para la Transición Justa (2022). Spain, towards a just energy transition. Spanish Government: Madrid.

94. EU (2020). COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Country Report Spain. SWD/2020/508 final.

95. Spanish Government (2022). ACUERDO DE ASOCIACIÓN DE ESPAÑA 2021-2027. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).

96. Just Transition Institute (2022). Convenios en marcha. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).

**Young people aged 16-30 were the target group of a specific national consultation between September and October 2021.** The consultation consisted in an online survey and a series of seven online workshops targeting most of the areas covered by the working groups. As of September 2022, neither the final drafts of the Just Transition Plan nor the results of the consultations have been published yet, so that **it is not possible yet to assess how meaningful the youth engagement activities were and what impact they had.**<sup>97</sup>

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97. Instituto para la Transición Justa (2022). Participación Juvenil. ([Link](#). Last consulted: 04.10.2022).

## Summary table

Country	Regions covered by a TJTP	Youth engaged in TJTPs?	Format	Youth in Monitoring Committee?
<b>Bulgaria</b>	Stara Zagora	<b>Yes</b>	Panel discussion	<b>No</b>
<b>Czechia</b>	Moravskoslezský Ústecký Karlovarský	<b>Yes</b>	Working group + conferences + dialogues with politicians	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Estonia</b>	Ida-Viru	<b>Yes</b>	Citizen assembly	<b>Yes</b>
<b>France</b>	Bouche-du-Rhône	<b>No</b>		<b>No</b>
	Nord + Pas de Calais	<b>No</b>		<b>No</b>
<b>Germany</b>	Lausitzer Revier	<b>Yes</b>	Joint online workshop + report	<b>Yes</b>
	Mitteldeutsches Revier	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>
	Rheinisches Revier	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>

<b>Greece</b>	W. Macedonia, Megalopolis, Aegean Islands	<b>Yes</b>	Bilateral meetings + conference	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Ireland</b>	Midlands	<b>Yes</b>	Online workshop	Undisclosed
<b>Hungary</b>	Heves, Baranya & BAZ	<b>Yes</b>	Interviews	<b>No</b>
<b>Italy</b>	Taranto	<b>No</b>		Undisclosed
	Sulcis	<b>No</b>		Undisclosed
<b>Luxembourg</b>	Romelange, Esch-sur-Alzette	<b>No</b>		<b>No</b>
<b>Netherlands</b>	Groningen	<b>Yes</b>	Stakeholder workshop	Undisclosed
<b>Poland</b>	Eastern Wielkopolska	<b>Yes</b>	Stakeholder workshops + Youth committee	<b>No</b>
	Upper Silesia	<b>Yes</b>	Bilateral meetings	<b>No</b>
	Lower Silesia	<b>No</b>		<b>No</b>

<b>Romania</b>	Hunedoara	<b>No</b>		<b>Yes (TBC)</b>
	Gorj	<b>No</b>		<b>No</b>
	Dolj	<b>No</b>		<b>No</b>
	Galați	<b>No</b>		<b>No</b>
	Prahova	<b>No</b>		<b>No</b>
	Mureș	<b>No</b>		<b>No</b>
<b>Slovakia</b>	Horná Nitra, Košice, Banskobystrický	<b>Yes</b>	Workshops + national survey	<b>Yes (informally)</b>
<b>Spain</b>	Asturias, León, Palencia, Cádiz, A Coruña, Córdoba, Almería, Teruel	<b>Yes</b>	Online survey + virtual workshops	Undisclosed

# Section 3. Conclusions and recommendations

Although we still find considerable differences across and within the EU Member States, a positive outcome of this update compared to our first assessment is that **an increasing amount of information on the JTM is being disclosed, revealing that a majority of EU Member States have engaged and will engage youth in the just transition.**

The three new countries we could add to our analysis, Greece, Hungary and Slovakia, have all carried out youth engagement activities supported by the local and/or national authorities. In the case of Greece, this happened only after an internal mobilisation of youth, as already observed in other cases (ex. Eastern Wielkopolska in Poland), while in the case of Hungary there are still doubts on how much the input of youth was considered.

**Concerning the twelve countries that were already assessed in the first edition of the report, for most of them the result has remained unchanged.** No youth engagement activities emerged in the negative cases of France, Romania, Luxembourg and Italy. For two countries, Czechia and Germany, youth engagement could finally be confirmed, mostly thanks to the feedback we received from the authorities and the disclosure of the TJTPs. Although our interviewees confirmed the criticalities of the Czech partnership process, the efforts of the authorities are to be credited. In other cases that were already positive, like Estonia, new details emerged on the follow ups of authorities to the input of youth, which show efforts to keep youth engaged beyond the writing of the TJTPs.

**Regarding the future of engagement, the disclosed drafts of TJTPs seem to point out that the situation in each Member State will remain similar to now.** Those states that engaged young people tend to provide for their inclusion in the Monitoring Committees, while those who did not engage make no mention of it (an exception is the TJTP of Hunedoara, Romania). However, the contrary is also true. Some Member States that did engage youth do not reveal if it will be represented in the Monitoring Committees in the future, as is the case of Ireland, Poland and Spain. **Thus, the fact youth was engaged in the writing of the TJTPs is often associated with their further engagement in the Monitoring Committees, but is not a guarantee in itself.** As more information will likely become available in the coming months, it will soon be possible to draw some final conclusions on which EU Member States engage youth in a meaningful way, and which do not.

Our findings still show that **the fact youth engagement took place is not a guarantee that it was meaningful**. Our three interviewees from Czechia, for instance, confirmed that the partnership process in their country offered extremely limited chances to provide input and know what was done with it, making the presence of youth and other stakeholders of little relevance to the decisions on TJTPs. A similar situation could be found in the Netherlands, where our interviewees did not have any update since the very hasty consultation organised in 2021. As a result, more interviews and further research will be needed to understand if the voices of young people are actually heard in all the activities that EU Member States have reported.

As TJTPs are being evaluated and approved by the European Commission, the JTM is now entering a crucial phase where capacity building is still possible. What emerged from our analysis is that **there is still room for improvement in the way meaningful youth engagement is implemented across EU**. In the context of a programme like the JTM, whose core goal is reducing the inequalities emerging from decarbonisation, the differences in engagement have the potential to induce new inequalities between those young people that had a say in the future of their community and those that were not asked or listened to.

**There is still time for the EU and its Member States to address the remaining gaps in order to prevent them from affecting the implementation of the JTM.** The EU institutions have the capacity to highlight the lack of youth engagement in the TJTPs and provide technical assistance. Its Member States have the capacity to organise youth engagement activities and empower their local administration to strengthen their partnerships with relevant stakeholders. **Many of the programmes that are already in place have the potential to strengthen the role of youth in the JTM.** These include particularly the Structural Reform Support Programme, the Just Transition Platform, the Toolkit for Youth Participation in the JTF and the call for proposals EUTEens4Green. Their proper implementation can support local authorities and the local civil society in their dialogue on how the funding from the JTM can be better spent to foster a true just transition.

In particular, we want to put forward the following recommendations to the main political actors in the implementation of the JTM:

- **To EU Member States:**

- **Include local youth representatives in all the Monitoring Committees** overseeing the implementation of the JTM.
- **Create formation courses for the civil servants** of the authorities tasked with the implementation of TJTPs to get acquainted with, and learn how to implement, the Commission's "Toolkit for the participation of youth in the JTF".
- **Dedicate a precise share of the projects of the implementation phase to youth** for entrepreneurship, engagement activities and education projects in schools and tertiary education.

- **To the European Commission:**

- **Include in the evaluation of TJTPs an assessment of the past and envisaged partnerships with civil society stakeholders, including youth**, with concrete recommendations on how to improve their engagement in the implementation phase.
- **Use the existing support mechanisms for state authorities**, such as the Just Transition Platform and the Technical Support Instrument, to promote the implementation of the "Toolkit for the participation of youth in the JTF" and EUTeens4Green.
- **Ensure full transparency of the just transition process** by making public and easily accessible the TJTPs of Member States, the approval criteria and the individual evaluations of each Plan.
- **Include the engagement of young people among the criteria for the first assessment of the implementation of the TJTPs** in 2025.



- **To the European Parliament:**

- **Make use of all your monitoring powers** to make sure the partnership principle remains at the core of the implementation of the JTM, ensuring in particular that young people are meaningfully engaged in the process.
- **Commission and disseminate independent monitoring reports on the state of the engagement of stakeholder groups, including youth**, in the implementation of the Just Transition Mechanism.
- **Welcome local civil society actors and monitoring NGOs to your debates on the state of the just transition** to get first-hand views on how the Just Transition Mechanism is being implemented on the field and what are the main challenges for non-state stakeholders.

# About us



**Generation  
Climate  
Europe**

**Generation Climate Europe** is the largest coalition of youth-led networks on climate and environmental issues at the European level. GCE unites the largest youth-led networks in Europe bringing together **381 national organisations** across **46 countries** in Europe. We are guided by the voices of over 20 million young Europeans. Uniting European youth networks, GCE creates a platform for the youth to advocate for a just and green transition in Europe.



**Bankwatch  
Network**

**Bankwatch** is the largest network of grassroots, environmental and human rights groups in central and eastern Europe. **We monitor public finance institutions** that are responsible for **hundreds of billions of investments** across the globe.

The banks and funds we watch are often obscure but always important entities that function outside public scrutiny. Together with local communities and other NGOs we work to expose their influence and provide a counterbalance to their unchecked power.





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