

## EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Participant:	INSTITUT PRO EVROPSKOU POLITIKU EUROPEUM ZS EUROPEUM
PIC number:	949668122
Project name and acronym:	Green but Just? Engaging V4 citizens and communities to achieve a socially just green transition — JustGreen

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	D13.1
Event name:	Report from webinars on Policy Research
Type:	Webinars
In situ/online:	online
Location:	-
Date(s):	25.06.2025, 16.09.2025, 18.11.2025, 19.11.2025, 20.11.2025, 21.11.2025
Website(s) (if any):	<a href="https://justgreeneu.eu/events/">https://justgreeneu.eu/events/</a>
Participants	
Female:	156
Male:	154
Non-binary:	0
From country 1 [Czechia]:	78
From country 2 [Slovakia]:	75
From country 3 [Hungary]:	67
From country 4 [Poland]:	83
From country 5 [Belgium]:	1
From country 6 [Germany]:	1
From country 7 [Sweden]:	1
From country 8 [Portugal]:	1

From country 9 [Austria]	3		
Total number of participants:	310	From total number of countries:	9
<b>Description</b>			
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			
<p>Between June and November 2025, a series of online webinars were organized by the consortium partners from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland. The objective of the webinars was to introduce the results of policy research and gather feedback from participants.</p> <p>Webinars took place in national languages, and in English. All webinars were conducted online, and in some of these cases featured guest speakers with expertise in the specific topics discussed together with the consortium representatives. Some participants joined from abroad, speaking the native languages of the consortium countries despite being located elsewhere. This results in a diverse list of participating countries.</p> <p><u>Czechia</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Are V4 households able to keep up with the EU’s renovation ambitions? Which groups are being left out of national renovation schemes, and why? What must change to make renovation support in the V4 more accessible and effective?</b></li> </ul> <p>In the webinar held on September 16 2025, the discussion focused on whether the renovation ambitions outlined in EU plans actually match the everyday reality in V4 households. The goal was to understand what works, and what does not, and which social groups across the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland are being left out of the renovation wave. The conversation unfolded through several guiding questions that helped highlight the most important gaps, but also the opportunities.</p> <p>We began by looking at the gap between plans and reality. The speakers agreed that while subsidies are reaching households — more than 600,000 renovation projects have been supported since 2009, which is about 15% of the Czech population — the pace of renovation is still far too low. For instance, in Czechia the renovation rate is roughly 1%, even though EU targets require around 2% for multi-family buildings and 3% for single-family homes. It also became clear that some groups remain underrepresented in subsidy programmes, meaning that national plans don’t always translate into inclusive implementation. What stood out was that Czechia doesn’t have an especially ambitious climate policy strategy overall, and the NGS scheme (funded from emission trading) remains a rare exception. Around 30% of Czechs say they plan to renovate, 18% have already applied for subsidies, and among those, 74% felt the effort was worthwhile — regardless of whether they received funding. Still, almost half of the public believes they wouldn’t even qualify, underscoring the size of the confidence gap.</p> <p>Then the conversation has moved to the barriers that homeowners may face, and this part got the audience strongly engage. Across all four countries, lower-income households are the most excluded. Even when programmes cover up to 90% of renovation costs, the remaining amount is still out of reach for many families. Renters and those living in multi-family buildings face additional constraints, often because decision-making requires agreement among many co-owners. High upfront costs and a general aversion to debt keep people away, even when pre-financing options</p>			

exist. Participants also mentioned complex administrative procedures, long processing times, and the fear of investing time and effort with uncertain results. Digital barriers continue to be a major issue as well — many households lack clear information about what is financed, who is eligible, or which measures make sense for their homes. A lack of trust, often based on past negative experiences, also came up. One positive note was that peer-to-peer sharing seems to help reduce scepticism, especially when people hear directly from neighbours who have successfully renovated.

Then, the event focused on what needs to change to make national renovation schemes more effective. When asked what single element they would change immediately, the speakers offered several concrete proposals. One idea was to organise community-level town hall meetings to share good practice, since each locality has different needs and a decentralised approach makes more sense. Another priority was to formalise advisory networks. At the moment, many advisors operate on a voluntary basis and can't always respond quickly, leaving households to search for information online. Increasing the renovation rate was also highlighted: making green loans accessible to a wider group of people, continuing to fund NGS from emission trading, and strengthening national climate targets. Education came up again, especially communicating that renovation isn't only about high energy prices — it's also about comfort, health, and long-term financial savings. Several participants stressed the need to include renters as well, either through incentives for landlords, improved subsidy conditions, or temporary tax reliefs.

The session ended with a discussion of what each country does well and what could serve as a model for others. The standout examples were the pre-financing approach, ongoing public campaigns, and the long-term stability of some programmes, which together create a more reliable environment for households considering renovation. Wide eligibility was also mentioned as a strong element that other countries could learn from.

Overall, the webinar showed that while the V4 region has made visible progress, the gap between plans and reality remains significant. Still, there is a potential to scale up renovation rates — if the region focuses on fairness, decentralised support, stronger communication, and simplifying the journey for households.

Speakers included Rebeka Hengalová, research fellow at EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy (Czechia), Filip Bajtoš, research fellow at Bratislava Policy Institute (Slovakia), Gábor Porhajas, board member of the Hungarian Society for Urban and Spatial Planning, contributor to 21 Research Centre (Hungary), and Krzysztof Mączka, analyst at Projekt: Polska Foundation (Poland).

#### Slovakia:

3-parts series webinar:

- **Just Green Webinar: Where does the V4 stand in sustainability?**
- **Where does the V4 stand in sustainability? — Can V4 households go green?**
- **Where does the V4 stand in sustainability?**

In the **first webinar**, on 19 November, the focus was mainly on where Slovakia stands in the green transition compared to the rest of the V4. It was highlighted that Slovakia is relatively strong in deploying renewables, but it lags behind when it comes to deep home-energy renovations. They also pointed out that Slovakia has the

highest share of households facing energy poverty among the V4. Another interesting point was that even though more than 90% of people live in owner-occupied homes, this doesn't automatically lead to more renovations, because in multi-owner apartment buildings residents often lack real decision-making power. Participants were quite surprised by how low the awareness of subsidy programmes is among Slovak households, so a long discussion followed on how this could be improved.

In the **second webinar**, on 20 November, the focus shifted to all four V4 countries. The discussion covered the structural issues they share: most buildings were built before 1990, insulation tends to be poor, and many low-income rural households still rely on solid fuels. It was emphasised that current renovation rates are far too low to meet EU climate goals. They also compared awareness of subsidy programmes, showing that Czechia and Poland perform much better, while Slovakia and Hungary struggle with trust and information gaps. A striking point was that only about a quarter of citizens believe they would qualify for subsidies, even though actual approval rates are higher among those who apply. At the end, there was a discussion about how to integrate social policy with renovation schemes and which financing models work best in different V4 contexts.

In the **third webinar**, on 21 November, the focus returned to Slovakia, this time from the perspective of NGOs and other stakeholders. The discussion centred around administrative and informational barriers. Many households find the procedures too complicated, have little trust in the process, and are unsure whether they are eligible. It was also highlighted that residents of apartment buildings and renters are often excluded from programmes, even though they make up a large part of the population. Participants raised several suggestions, such as creating transparent renovation monitoring systems, increasing the number of municipal-level information centres (especially in rural areas), and scaling up pilot programmes while expanding eligibility criteria.

#### Hungary:

- **“Green Transition and Housing: Who Can Afford It?”, the discussion focused on how climate goals connect with housing policy and whether the green transition is socially fair**

In the webinar held on 25 June 2025. It was organised by the 21 Research Center as part of the JustGreen project. The event took place online via Zoom and was livestreamed on Facebook, so the audience could join in throughout.

The conversation was moderated by Kata Dóra Kiss, and the speakers were Dóra Csernus, Director for Climate, Energy and Environmental Policy at the Equilibrium Institute, and Zsuzsanna Koritár, Policy Expert at Habitat for Humanity Hungary. Together, they looked at how European and national climate objectives actually affect everyday life in Hungarian households, especially when it comes to energy efficiency, renovation policies, and whether people can afford these changes at all.

The webinar started with clarifying the key ideas behind the green transition and the EU's 2050 climate targets. Csernus talked about the kinds of systemic changes expected from households, from more energy-efficient renovations to shifts in consumption habits. Koritár highlighted that many low-income families simply can't take part in this transition unless the state provides targeted support. The moderator also brought in findings from 21 Research Center's research showing that although 82% of Hungarians see climate change as a serious issue, financial insecurity is the

main obstacle: 57% of people who avoid renovating their homes say they just don't have the money for it.

From there, the conversation moved to the fairness question: who actually benefits from green subsidies, and who risks being left out? Koritár pointed out that many of the most vulnerable households, especially those living in outdated homes or rented housing, are often excluded from support schemes. Csernus stressed the need for closer cooperation among public institutions, NGOs, and financial actors to create genuinely inclusive renovation programmes. Both speakers agreed that communication about the green transition needs to clearly connect environmental goals with people's everyday financial concerns.

In the final part of the webinar, participants asked questions through the chat, and the moderator read them aloud. People wanted to know whether current government schemes consider regional inequalities, what can be learned from Hungary's previous panel housing renovation programme, and how tenants—who don't own their homes—can still be supported in improving energy efficiency. Some questions reflected wider uncertainty, like "Will the green transition make housing more expensive for everyone?" and "How can people trust that climate policies won't worsen social inequality?" The speakers responded by emphasising the importance of transparent policymaking and financial tools that focus on accessibility, not just profitability.

The webinar brought together around 60 participants from academia, civil society, and the general public. Because the format was interactive, it didn't just allow expert discussion, but also real reflection from citizens on fairness, affordability, and participation in the green transition. The insights from this session will contribute to the broader goals of the JustGreenEU project, especially by helping to understand how social inequalities shape attitudes toward climate action in Central Europe.

#### Poland:

- **Where Does Poland Stand in Sustainable Housing?, Transition and Housing in Poland, Can Polish Households Afford to Go Green?, Sustainability vs. Affordability in Poland's Housing Sector**

In this webinar, Dr. Miłosz Hodun opened the session with an introductory presentation. He pointed out that Poland has one of the lowest numbers of housing units per capita in the EU, with only about 419–420 dwellings per 1,000 people. On top of that, a large share of Polish homes are extremely energy-inefficient. Almost 40% of the residential stock was built before 1970, often without proper insulation or modern heating, which contributes to energy poverty for around 1.5 million households. Some research even shows that depending on the criteria used, more than 40% of households might experience some level of energy poverty. And although Poland has already identified around €65 billion for housing renovation in its long-term strategy, designing a system that actually reaches the most vulnerable remains a major challenge.

During the webinar on November 19th, the JustGreen research team shared its findings, including detailed case studies and testimonies from households. The discussion, moderated by Miłosz Hodun with expert comments from Dr. Maciej Milewicz, was lively and at times sharply divided, which reflected the real tensions in Poland's housing debate.

On one side, there were very enthusiastic voices supporting sustainability. These participants were eager to get access to more data and felt that the qualitative stories collected by JustGreen — for example, families dealing with high heating bills or living in old, poorly insulated homes — offer strong evidence for shaping better policies. For them, these stories are powerful advocacy tools that can help ensure renovation funds and subsidies truly reach those who need them most.

On the other side, some participants were more sceptical, focusing on affordability. They argued that Poland's most urgent housing problem isn't sustainability, but rather the lack of affordable homes, overcrowding, and limited social housing. From their perspective, pushing heavily for "green" solutions without addressing basic access to housing creates a disconnect between policy priorities and everyday reality.

The political context made the discussion even more important. With growing support for right-wing, anti-EU, and libertarian groups in Poland, many participants stressed that making a strong case for sustainable housing cannot rely on purely environmental arguments. To persuade sceptics, the framing needs to shift. Several key ideas came up: Treating sustainability as a social equity issue — showing that green housing helps protect low- and middle-income families from rising energy costs.

Highlighting economic benefits — explaining that energy-efficient homes reduce monthly bills, improve health conditions, and increase property value, which makes the argument appealing across political lines. Improving transparency and fairness — creating more localised, accountable ways of distributing renovation support, especially in a climate where there is distrust toward central institutions and EU funding.

By the end of the webinar, there was broad agreement that even though sustainable housing in Poland is a huge challenge, it's also an unavoidable one. The main recommendations that emerged included: Prioritising renovation of the worst-performing homes, especially those lived in by low-income families. Simplifying application procedures and improving outreach to rural and marginalised communities. Strengthening communication strategies to focus on cost savings, social justice, and health benefits, not just climate goals. Supporting data-driven policymaking by making research and household testimonies more accessible and usable for local governments.