

BULGARIA | MARCH 17TH, 2026

3rd NATIONAL ROUNDTABLE

FINANCING ENERGY EFFICIENCY: THE NATIONAL RENOVATION PLAN AND THE ROLE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES



Organised by: EnEffect Consult and the Municipal Network for Energy Efficiency EcoEnergy



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**22
SPEAKERS
AND
MODERATORS**

**90
DELEGATES**

6 SESSIONS

Official Opening | Opening Plenary |

2 Discussion Sessions | 1 Transnational Workshop | Closing

01

DISCUSSION SESSION

**Reforms And New
Instruments To Stimulate
Building Renovation**

02

DISCUSSION SESSION

**The Net Zero Cities
Initiative And The EU
Mission On Climate
Adaptation**

03

TRANSNATIONAL WORKSHOP

**The Modernisation
and Decarbonisation
of District Heating
Systems**



DISCUSSION SESSION 1

REFORMS AND NEW INSTRUMENTS TO STIMULATE BUILDING RENOVATION

- ☐ Participants called for a transition from intermittent programme-based support to a stable, long-term renovation framework. Regulatory measures, financing instruments and institutional coordination were discussed as interconnected requirements, with public funding helping to mobilise private investment.
- ☐ The residential renovation discussion highlighted differences in homeowners' financial capacity, organisational arrangements and technical expertise. Permanent programmes, tailored financing and staged renovation were proposed to address these constraints, with renovation passports supporting step-by-step planning.
- ☐ Gaps in building-stock information and limited energy performance certificate coverage were identified as obstacles to prioritisation, monitoring and financing. Participants called for more accessible certification and improved data tools, including better information on public buildings and previously renovated properties.
- ☐ The National Decarbonisation Fund was discussed as a key financing instrument, but participants raised concerns about its scale and sustainable capitalisation. The session called for a clearer long-term financial framework capable of addressing the gap between renovation needs and secured resources.
- ☐ One-stop shops were identified as important support structures, particularly where homeowners must co-finance renovation and navigate more complex financing arrangements. The discussion also identified a missing link between completed energy audits and implementation.



DISCUSSION SESSION 2

THE NET ZERO CITIES INITIATIVE AND THE EU MISSION ON CLIMATE ADAPTATION

- ☐ Participants emphasised the need to integrate climate adaptation and mitigation in local investment planning. The discussion supported incorporating resilience considerations from the planning stage and using financing conditions to address climate risks alongside energy efficiency and renewable energy.
- ☐ Stronger coordination between national institutions and local authorities was identified as necessary for implementation. Proposals included a functioning coordination structure with adequate resources, continuity and feedback from municipalities, connecting financing decisions with local priorities.
- ☐ The European Energy Award was presented as a structured municipal energy management approach, combining assessment, target-setting, implementation, monitoring and external audits. Its use in energy accounting and investment planning was highlighted, alongside support for adoption through the LEEAN-CET project.
- ☐ Net Zero Cities resources were presented as opportunities for municipalities to access expertise, training, peer exchange and partnerships. Participants stressed the importance of capacity-building support for smaller municipalities and the relevance of European platforms beyond formally selected mission cities.
- ☐ Better Funding Dialogues were presented as a continuing process for cooperation between municipalities, national authorities and financial actors. The discussion identified dependence on central transfers, limited borrowing capacity and constrained municipal resources as financing barriers, and encouraged municipal participation in subsequent consultations.



TRANSNATIONAL WORKSHOP

THE MODERNISATION AND DECARBONISATION OF DISTRICT HEATING SYSTEMS

- ☐ Romanian case studies presented through REHEATEAST illustrated different approaches to district heating modernisation, geothermal integration and digitalisation. Participants highlighted the relevance of cross-country exchange and financing combinations involving European, national, local and private resources.
- ☐ The session called for diversified financing arrangements for district heating, including public funding, private investment, ESCO models and risk mitigation. Debt restructuring was also identified as necessary for the most financially distressed companies.
- ☐ Participants proposed integrating demand-side interventions into building renovation programmes. The REHEATEAST pilot addressing the conversion of vertical to horizontal installations in multifamily buildings was identified as having replication potential, alongside improvements to outdated internal heating and domestic hot water systems.
- ☐ Geothermal development was discussed as requiring dedicated financing instruments, geological risk insurance, technical partnerships and institutional support. Participants called for moving beyond legislative definitions towards the preparation of investable projects.
- ☐ The absence of a national framework for local heating and cooling plans was identified as a barrier to municipal planning and access to financing opportunities. Participants called for an appropriate implementation framework, supported by resources, data and capacity building.
- ☐ Gabrovo presented a decentralised heating pilot involving building owners under NetZeroHero. Technical and pre-investment studies were being developed, while the financing model combining municipal resources, European funding and owner co-investment required further development. The discussion considered its potential relevance to municipalities without centralised heating.

