EU Social Climate Fund at risk of mismanagement

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An exclusive new report from eight major European local and regional government networks has found that vulnerable households in the EU are at risk of being underserved by the €86 billion Social Climate Fund (SCF), due to inadequate consultation of local and regional governments by national governments.

The survey underpinning the report, conducted by the Local Alliance – a coalition comprising ACR+, CEMR, Climate Alliance, Energy Cities, Eurocities, FEDARENE, ICLEI Europe and POLIS– highlights widespread non-compliance with key requirements under SCF legislation.

Articles 4 and 5 of the SCF state that member states must engage with local and regional governments in developing their national Social Climate Plans. However, the report finds that many governments are failing to fulfil these obligations, often reducing consultations to empty gestures or bypassing them entirely.

A missed opportunity to address local needs

The SCF is a flagship initiative under the European Green Deal, aimed at supporting vulnerable groups, such as households facing energy or transport poverty. But the findings show a troubling disconnect between national decision-makers and their local governments.

The survey, covering cities and regions across 14 member states, including Belgium, Finland, Germany, Greece and Spain, paints a stark picture of delayed consultations, inadequate dialogue, and missed opportunities to incorporate local expertise.

> If city and regional governments are side lined, we risk turning the Social Climate Fund into a missed opportunity to improve the lives of Europe's most vulnerable people," states André Sobczak, Secretary General of Eurocities. "To truly tackle energy and transport poverty, we need national governments to

shift from token consultations to genuine partnerships with local partners who understand the realities on the ground.

Local governments: Key partners for effective action

Local and regional governments are uniquely positioned to ensure that EU funds address the specific needs of their communities. They bring expertise, proximity, and an understanding of local priorities, which are crucial for tailoring measures to effectively support vulnerable households.

The absence of meaningful consultation not only undermines the legislative requirements but also jeopardises the effectiveness of the SCF just six months before member states are due to submit their plans in June.

Recommendations for national and EU decision-makers

To ensure the Social Climate Fund effectively supports vulnerable households, the Local Alliance urges member states, amongst others, to prioritise meaningful collaboration with regional and local governments, through locally developed plans such as SECAPs and Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans.

This will provide EU investments that are aligned with local needs to address energy and transport poverty, ensuring measures that target the needs of vulnerable groups like women, older people and single-parent households.

1. Download the full report from the Local Alliance: ‘ Unlocking the Potential of Local and Regional Governments in the Social Climate Fund’

2. The members of the Local Alliance are: Association of Cities and Regions for sustainable Resource management (ACR+); The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR); Climate Alliance; Energy Cities; Eurocities; FEDARENE; ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability; POLIS.

3. Eurocities wants to make cities places where everyone can enjoy a good quality of life, is able to move around safely, access quality and inclusive public services and benefit from a healthy environment. We do this by networking more than 200 larger European cities, which

together represent some 150 million people across 38 countries, and by gathering evidence of how policy making impacts people to inspire other cities and EU decision makers. Connect with us at https://eurocities.eu/ or by following our Bluesky, Threads, Twitter.

2. Download the full report from the Local Alliance: ‘

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