

Recovery and Resilience Plans: the involvement of stakeholders and their views



This paper provides an overview of stakeholders' activities at national, regional and local level, in relation to national Recovery and Resilience Plans (RRPs). The overview includes updates on two recently conducted surveys on the RRF implementation. Furthermore, it presents the latest opinions and assessments by EU stakeholders and other relevant institutions and bodies on the implementation of these plans. This paper is a follow-up of previous [EGOV publications](#) on the involvement and views expressed by stakeholders in the context of the RRFs.

1. Introduction

This paper provides an overview of EU stakeholders and other relevant institutions' and bodies' assessments related to the Recovery and Resilience Plans (RRPs), with a specific focus on the monitoring activities carried out by third parties. It also includes a review of RRF related activities by national, regional and local authorities, social partners, civil society organisations and other relevant stakeholders.

The Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) [Regulation](#) requires national RRFs to include "a summary of the consultation process, conducted in accordance with the national legal framework, of local and regional authorities, social partners, civil society organisations, youth organisations and other relevant stakeholders, and how the input of the stakeholders is reflected in the RRF." However, this is not a formal assessment criterion for the evaluation of the Plans.

The Commission's first RRF [annual report](#) from March 2022 highlighted that discussions with stakeholders in the preparation and implementation of the RRFs are **essential** for the Facility's success. Accordingly, the Commission recommends that for the implementation of the plans "Member States [to] engage actively with social partners, civil society organisations and other stakeholders through dedicated regular meetings. These exchanges could also be an opportunity to engage on the broader economic, employment, social and sustainability policy coordination agenda and will help to commonly identify challenges, improve policy solutions and contribute to a successful implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility."

To strengthen collaboration with stakeholders on monitoring the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility and to support the scrutiny process in the European Parliament, please forward us relevant information: egov@europarl.europa.eu.



2. Views expressed by other European institutions and bodies

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)



In May 2022 the EESC adopted a [resolution](#) on the involvement of organised civil society in the implementation and monitoring of the national RRP based on experiences of roundtable meetings with Civil Society in Member States. The resolution supported the **green, digital and social objectives** of the NRRPs but it regretted that the social dimension of the plan was relatively underdeveloped despite the importance of this for the resilience aspect. EESC's resolution supported the Organised Civil Society (OSC) by calling *"for more transparency in the implementation and monitoring of the plans and asks that information be made publicly available and that dialogues around them with all relevant stakeholders be further encouraged."*

The EESC published a [statement](#) on 24 November 2021, welcoming the European Semester [Autumn Package](#) published by the Commission on that same date and positively underlining the integration of the RRF into the European Semester Cycle. Christa Schweng, president of the EESC, called for the future Country Specific Recommendations to include the issue of the involvement of organised civil society in the implementation of the national RRF plans.

The EESC adopted an [opinion](#) on 20 October 2021 expressing its concerns *"about the insufficient clarity in most Member States on the National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRP) governance systems and the distribution of responsibilities for their implementation between the central, regional and local levels"*. Furthermore, EESC emphasised the importance of the next cycle of the European Semester and the need for good indicators to measure the progress of the RRP implementation.

On 9 June 2021, the EESC adopted a [resolution](#), putting forward its contribution to the 2022 Commission's work programme and noting with regret that national administrations have only slightly involved organised civil society in drawing up their RRP. The EESC repeated¹ its call to the Commission for these shortcomings to be corrected in the RRP implementation and evaluation phases, by establishing more formal procedures that facilitate meaningful exchanges. The resolution mentioned the EESC would expect the Commission to recognise in next year's work programme the key role of business, workers and civil society organisations in implementing the national RRP, their review process and their monitoring. In doing so, EESC assumed that the 20 principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights guiding EU social policy would also be at the centre of the recovery strategy, to ensure that the digital and green transitions are just and fair.

The EESC has conducted several roundtable meetings with the civil society in the Member States to ensure continuing dialogues on the RRP and to monitor their implementation. The dialogues were organised between October 2021 and March 2022. The discussions highlighted the need for an inclusive and fair transition of the green and digital reforms. Following these experiences, the EESC is convinced *"that a well-functioning social dialogue about the shaping of the NRRPs is crucial for developing effective responses to the recovery from the crisis. The exchange of best practices and information from the Member States serve as an important reference point for those Member States, whether they are still in the preliminary stage of the RRF or in the implementation phase of their plans."* (A summary of the dialogues can be found [here](#)).

¹ See its [previous resolution](#) of 25 February 2021

The Committee of the Regions



On 1 December 2021, the Committee of Regions (CoR)² adopted an [opinion](#) regretting that, in most Member States, preparing the RRP has been mainly a top-down process and voiced their concerns over the lack of sub-national involvement in the implementation and evaluation phases. According to CoR, this approach carries the risk of centralising important public investments and overlooking territorial differences, thus undermining the impact of recovery plans. The CoR also asked the European

Commission to include a section on the involvement of local and regional authorities in its annual report on implementation of the RRF, and called on the European Parliament to play its full role as watchdog over the achievement of the recovery plans' goals, involving local and regional authorities on a regular basis.

In July 2021, the CoR presented an updated [study](#) focusing on the involvement of LRAs in the preparation and implementation of RRP³. The study found that *"There are gaps in preparation and intervention of the plans (...) The lack of LRA involvement means the territorial dimension is only partially addressed in NRRPs and there is mis-coordination with Cohesion Policy"*. The study also found that lack of LRA involvement could lead to negative consequences: *"Firstly, the NRRPs could be less efficient and impactful since LRAs are crucial to delivering investments and services as well as implementing reforms. Secondly, potential synergies with Cohesion Policy funds may not be exploited, and RRF investments might overlap and even displace Cohesion Policy interventions. LRAs were less involved due to specific attitudes of central government rather than national constitutions. The European Semester process also does not facilitate the inclusion of LRAs"*.

The study thus recommended that *"[i]n the near term (i.e. the next 6 months), the Commission should enhance the involvement of LRAs by focusing NRRP analysis specifically on stakeholder consultations and future governance (...) The CoR and European LRA associations such as CEMR, CPMR and Eurocities should support regions and municipalities, and their national associations in approaching their central authority by disseminating information and increasing awareness. In the medium term (i.e. the next 18 months), the EC should enhance monitoring and reporting for NRRPs (and the engagement of LRAs), empowering regions and municipalities with tailored capacity building"*.

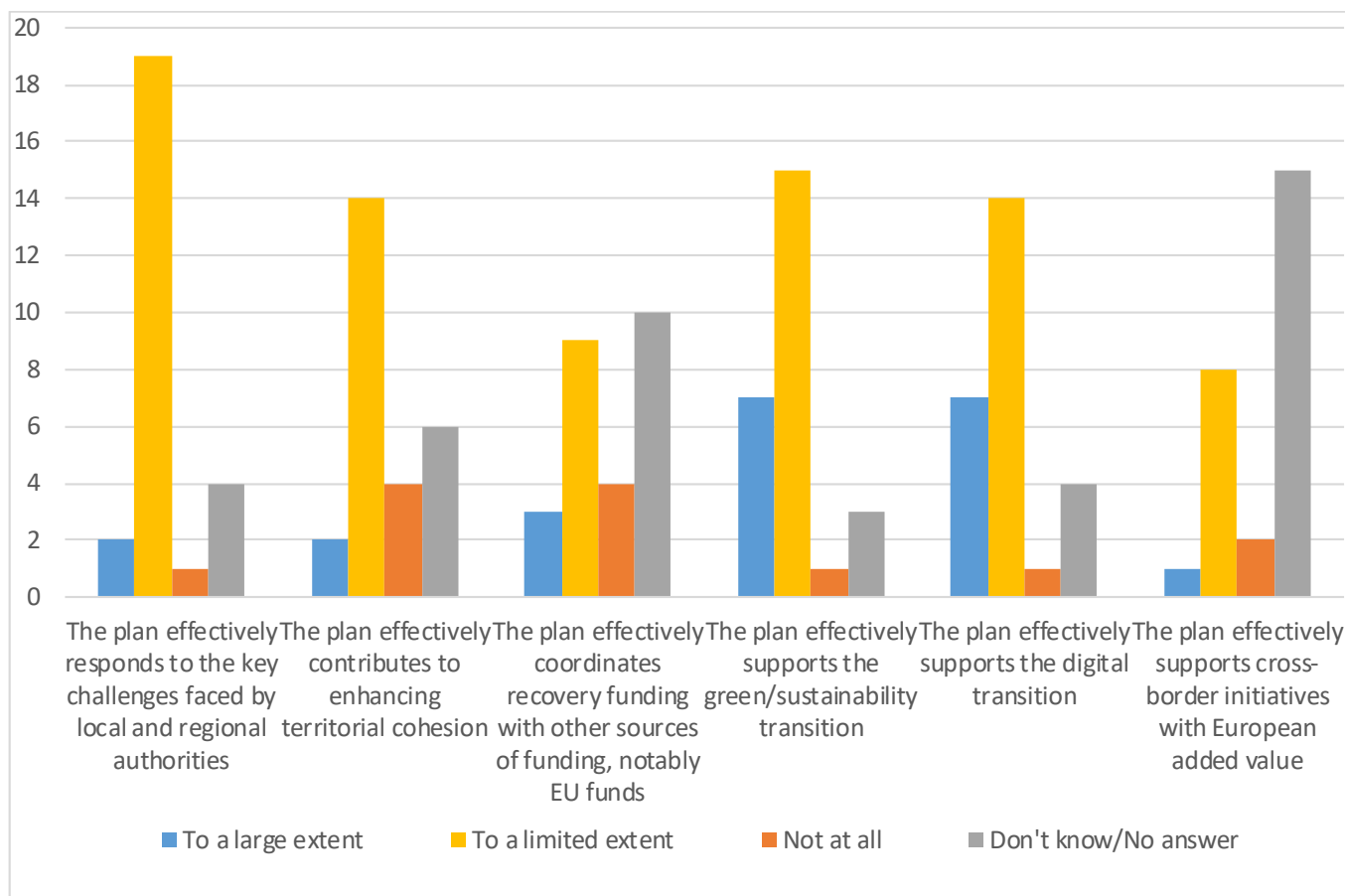
Between mid-January and late March 2022, the Committee of Regions (CoR) and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) launched a second [consultation](#)⁴ to investigate the role of local and regional authorities in the implementation of the national RRP. It targeted associations of local and regional governments and authorities (LRAs) across the EU. The consultation gathered the views and experiences of 26 organisations representative of a variety of subnational government levels across 19 EU Member States (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia and Slovenia).

² The Committee of the Regions is the interface between the European Union and its local and regional governments. The CoR is working to assist, inform, engage and represent regions and cities by sharing news and information through the [Covid-19 Exchange Platform](#).

³ The study covers eight RRP submitted to the EU by the end of May 2021 (Belgium, Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Romania and Spain).

⁴ CoR-CEMR, *The involvement of municipalities, cities and regions in the preparation of the national Recovery and Resilience Plans: Results of the CoR-CEMR targeted consultation*. [January 2021](#).

Figure 1: To what extent do you agree with the statements below regarding the National Recovery and Resilience Plan of your country?



For the questions concerning the content of the national RRP, *“a considerably higher number of respondents believe that the plans contribute “to a large extent” to the green and digital transition than to other objectives.”*⁵ This can be explained by the fact that a minimum share of investments has to be directed towards green and digital transition, while other objectives are not matched with quantitative targets.

The statement on plans effectively supporting cross-border initiatives received a high share of “Don’t know/No answer” from the respondents indicating that many LRAs are not involved in such projects or are not aware of such support in the RRP (see Figure 5). To the question whether reforms contained in the RRP are deemed beneficial for LRAs, most organisations believe that plans will accelerate green transition and digitalisation of public administration.

As for the role of LRAs in implementation of the RRP, respondents are rather pessimistic. A very small share of organisations indicated having an appropriate role in monitoring or being sufficiently taken into consideration, based on their competencies. Overall, **LRAs role is very limited in the implementation of RRP.**

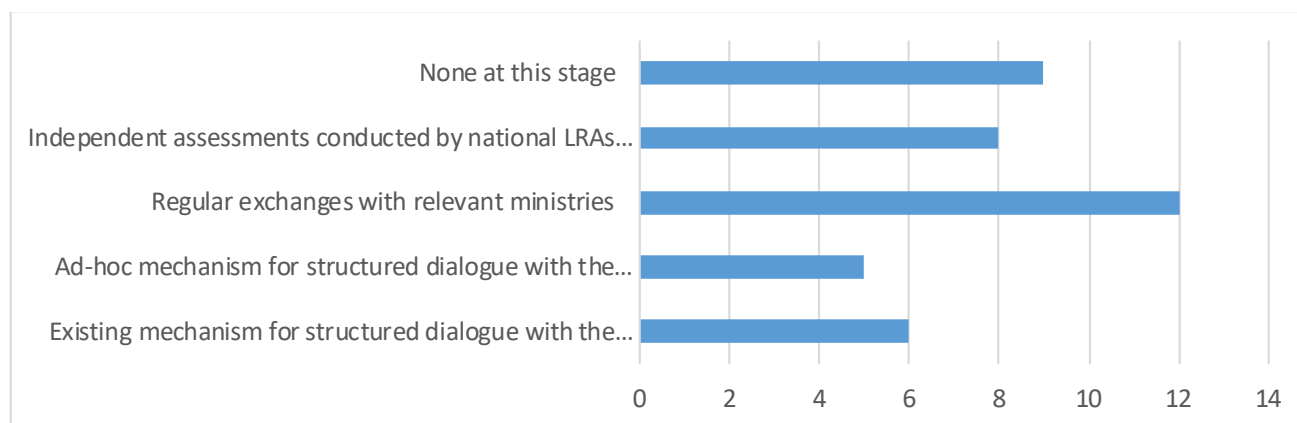
As a principal barrier to the successful involvement of LRAs in the implementation of the RRP, respondents identified the lack of willingness by the national government to involve subnational level, notably due to a set-up and timing. The barriers were also seen as to be coinciding with significant risks in relation to the

⁵ CoR-CEMR survey available at <https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/brochures/Documents/RRF-consultation-2022.pdf>

implementation of the RRP. The main risks identified relate to the objectives of the plans (the failure to reach targets and milestones or misallocation of funds).

When it comes to monitoring, only **approximately a quarter of organisations reports that they will rely on ad-hoc monitoring mechanisms for structured dialogue with the government to scrutinise the implementation of the RRP.**

Figure 2: What kind of mechanism will you use to monitor the implementation of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan in your country?



European Ombudsman



In February 2022, the European Ombudsman highlighted in a [letter](#) to the Commission the importance of transparency and accountability when using RRF funds. The Ombudsman asks the Commission to explain the procedures in place to ensure transparency when negotiating national plans; how public scrutiny of milestones and targets is being envisaged and whether the Commission will provide a dedicated website listing the national plans. The

Ombudsman also questions how the Commission intends to supervise audit mechanisms in Member States and whether the Commission will ask from Member States information on final beneficiaries. Furthermore, the European Ombudsman announced to launch an [initiative](#) jointly with OECD preparing a document outlining “Good Practice Principles for government transparency in the use of recovery funds” which will be published in the coming months.

Operation Sentinel

By the initiative of Europol, the European Public Prosecutor’s Office (EPPO), Eurojust, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and 19 EU Member States, [Operation Sentinel](#) was launched in the autumn 2021 to target fraud against COVID-19 EU recovery funds. The network will focus on proactive intelligence sharing, information exchange and supporting the coordination of operations.

Network of EU Independent Fiscal Institutions⁶

In its [June 2021](#) European Fiscal Monitor, the [Network of EU Independent Financial Institutions](#)⁷ addressed RRP and assessed the involvement of national independent fiscal institutions in the process leading to their adoption. The Network⁸ reads *“National IFIs noted that the reforms outlined in the RRP are ambitious, complex and highly dependent on the capacity of the administration and effective coordination with other stakeholders when it comes to implementation.”* It also signals that *“Only 7 out of 32 national IFIs⁹ had an official role in RRP. The Belgian Federal Planning Bureau (FPB), Estonian Fiscal Council (EFC) and Slovenian Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development (IMAD) were tasked with assessing the macroeconomic impact of the EU-financed component of the national RRP¹⁰, and four others have provided or will provide an opinion on the national RRP. Overall, national IFIs deemed the RRP to be appropriate. However, some have questioned the underlying assumptions and overall fragmentation of the national RRP. Eight IFIs¹¹ have raised concerns about the content, lack of information about the projected reforms, and the implementation and prioritisation of the national RRP.”*

The most recently published European Fiscal Monitor in [January 2022](#) highlighted *“that many governments have started to gradually phase out COVID-related fiscal measures. COVID-19-related fiscal stimulus announced within 2022 budgets is expected to cost about 1% of GDP. This figure might increase, however, should the epidemiological situation deteriorate. Many questions remain about the deactivation of national escape clauses. Following the decision to prolong the EU general escape clause throughout 2022, national escape clauses have also been prolonged in most EU Member States that have a national escape clause. Nevertheless, many countries already reached their pre-pandemic output levels in 2021. National IFIs in these countries are concerned about the risks of excessive long-term public spending if governments are not subject to a rules-based framework without a compelling rationale.”*

⁶ Recital 59 of the RRF Regulation states that the Member States should be encouraged to seek the opinion of national productivity boards and independent fiscal institutions on their RRP, including possible validation of their elements. In its [January 2021 guidance](#), the Commission called also on the Member States to involve national advisory bodies, such as national fiscal boards and national productivity boards, in the decision process leading to the adoption/submission of the RRP.

⁷ The Network provides to national independent fiscal institutions a platform to exchange views, expertise and pool resources in areas of common concern. It was formally established on the 11th of September 2015 and currently includes the independent fiscal institutions from Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The Network supports the efforts to review and reinforce the EU fiscal framework, seeking to better exploit the synergies between rules and institutions, as well as between different levels of administration whilst respecting the principle of subsidiarity and enhancing local ownership and accountability. Secretariat is provided by CEPS.

⁸ The Report was prepared by the Network Secretariat on the basis of information collected from national independent fiscal institutions and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of national IFIs (see p. 4 of the Report).

⁹ “BE FPB, CZ, EE, FI EPC, EL HFC, LV, SI IMAD.”

¹⁰ “The NL CPB also has a mandate to assess the macroeconomic impact of the RRP and will likely do so once the government submits it.”

¹¹ “CZ, ES, EL HFC, IT, LV, NL CPB, PT, SK.”

National Productivity Boards

A European Commission [staff document](#) published in September 2021 outlined the missed opportunity for most Member States to involve National Productivity Boards¹² in their RRFs: *“In the current context, Member States could have sought the expert opinion of Boards to a higher degree on the reforms and investments included in the Recovery and Resilience Plans. While there is no requirement for governments to consult them, the Commission’s Guidance to Member States on the Recovery and Resilience Plans calls on Member States to seek the advice of their Productivity Boards on the plans. However, only a minority of governments have consulted the Productivity Boards on their draft Recovery and Resilience Plans. Looking ahead, National Productivity Boards could assess the effect of productivity-related reforms adopted in the framework of the Recovery and Resilience Plans.”*

Box: Some other relevant sources

[Eurostat: Statistical Recovery Dashboard](#)

The [Eurostat recovery dashboard](#) contains monthly and quarterly indicators from a number of statistical areas relevant for tracking the economic and social recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, across countries and time.

[OECD Recovery Dashboard](#)

OECD has established a [Recovery Dashboard](#) which is a tool to monitor the quality of the recovery from the pandemic, based on a proposal by an advisory group of representatives of national statistical offices from OECD countries. The dashboard features twenty indicators¹ grouped into four larger categories that monitor whether the COVID-19 recovery is (a) [strong](#), (b) [inclusive](#), (c) [green](#) and (d) [resilient](#). This platform will be continuously updated and improved as new data and sources become available.

3. Overview of public portals relating to RRF assessments

This section provides a lists of various EU and national organisations that are monitoring the RRF, notably RRFs implementation, either from a country-specific or a policy-specific perspective.

[CEPS: Recovery and Resilience Facility Monitor](#)



This RRF project of the *Centre for European Policy Studies* (CEPS) monitors the process of approval and implementation of the RRF. The key focus of the project is on the economic and fiscal implications and stability of the RRF. The CEPS RRF monitor [website](#) includes a set of [publications](#) and data resources regarding national RRFs, such as:

- [RRF Data Monitor](#)¹³ that presents an overview of the key aspects of the RRF, such as, *inter alia*, the grants and loans requested per country in EUR billions;

¹² According to the Commission, national Productivity Boards are now established in 18 Member States. Six new Boards have been established since the publication of the first progress report in 2019 (Germany, Greece, Malta, Latvia, Slovakia, and Croatia). In 2020, one country, Romania, wound down its Productivity Board. All but four euro-area countries (Austria, Estonia, Italy and Spain) have established a Productivity Board. For an introduction, see also this [EGOV paper](#).

¹³ Additionally, implementation and debt monitors are under construction and will be available [here](#) and [here](#), respectively.

- Individual assessments of the reforms proposed in the national RRP of [Italy](#), [Germany](#), [Spain](#), [France](#), [Portugal](#), [Slovakia](#), [Austria](#) and [Belgium](#);
- A [policy brief](#) that analyses to what extent the RRF funds distributed are used by Member States to finance new projects, published on 10 January 2022¹⁴;
- A [reflection paper](#) comparing and assessing the NRRPs of six Member States (Italy, Germany, Spain, France, Portugal and Slovakia), published on 24 September 2021 with the latest update released in March 2022 including two new Member States (Austria and Belgium);
- A [reflection paper](#) comparing the cases of Italy and Germany's RRP, published on 10 September 2021;
- A [page](#) where all the national plans, as well as the Commission's assessments, can be accessed;
- A list of [information sources](#) related to both NRRPs and CSRs;
- A [media page](#) with video recordings of recent online seminars on the topic of RRF.
- A [publication](#) for the European Parliament providing an analysis of the National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs) of Austria, Belgium, and Germany.

[Bruegel: European Union countries' recovery and resilience plans](#)



The current version of Bruegel's [dataset](#) focuses on planned investment by countries that have submitted their plans. Bruegel plans to [update](#) its dataset with the remaining countries and perform an analysis, including a comparison of proposed reforms, also in light of the country-specific recommendations (CSRs) made in the context of the European Semester. The latest update included the addition of data for Bulgaria, Malta, Ireland and Denmark to

the main [dataset](#).

Bruegel's current analysis [compares](#) countries according to their RRF spending on green, digital and other goals. It concludes, based on the current dataset, that countries that receive relatively lower amounts as a share of GDP focus more on green and digital spending than countries that receive larger amounts. It also presents a [figure](#) that suggests that 1) RRF could contribute to convergence of poorer countries given that there is a strong relationship between the cross-country allocation of grants and the level of development and 2) that there is no association with expected GNI growth from 2019 to 2021.

Moreover, Bruegel compares the composition of the NRRPs according to the six pillars defined in the RRF regulation ([table](#) and [graph](#)), as well as according to the [seven flagship areas](#) for investment and reforms defined by the Commission ([table](#) and [graph](#)). Besides, it also compares the plans in terms of spending in economic activities as a % of total spending ([table](#) and [graph](#)). Lastly, it [compares](#) the time profile of the planned recovery spending of 8 Member States.

Bruegel also publishes [blog posts](#) and opinions on the subject of RRF. For instance, the most recent [blog post](#) (February 2022) comments on the NRRPs assessments by the Commission, focusing in particular on cost justifications of the plans. Another [blog post](#) (July 2021) examines the green spending priorities in the different national plans. An [opinion](#) from January 2022 discusses a role for the RRF in a new fiscal framework.

[European Policy Centre: Project on RRP: enablers of the twin transformations?](#)



The *European Policy Centre* project aims at analysing RRP and the extent to which they effectively contribute to the green and digital transition while assuring social, economic, and territorial cohesion. Going beyond the analysis of the texts, the project will dig deeper and explore the national political contexts in which the RRP are discussed and

¹⁴ The same paper was also published as an EconPol Policy brief in December 2021 (see [here](#)).

created. The project will compare the different national RRP and present an overarching assessment at the EU level to highlight differences, analyse the overall coherence of the plans, and identify potential conflicts.

Thus far, the project has published a [discussion paper](#) (27 April 2021) that assesses whether the NRRPs of 5 Member States (France, Italy, Poland, Greece and Italy) empower the green and digital transitions.

[The Green Recovery Tracker](#) (Wuppertal Institute and E3G - Third Generation Environmentalism)



The *Green Recovery Tracker* assesses the contribution of EU member states' national recovery plans to the green transition. The assessment is based on a quantitative and qualitative analysis conducted in partnership with local experts.

On the project's [website](#), there are individual [country reports](#) for 18 Member States. These analyses focus on the green spending share as compared to the EU's benchmark of 37% and highlights good practices, bad practices and surprising factors found in the national plans. These individual reports also provide a sectoral analysis and a detailed listing of each country's measures with effect on green transition. The key findings of the country analyses are summarised in this short [briefing](#).

The organisation also published a [report](#) (December 2021) taking stock on where the green recovery stands at the end of 2021 and a [guidance](#) with suggestions on how to align funding with climate targets for future funding programs.

The Green Recovery Tracker also has detailed [Sectoral Analysis](#) section and a [Knowledge Hub](#) section where relevant research, policy papers and websites on the green recovery can be found. It is possible to filter these information sources by country.

[Renovate Europe](#)



Renovate Europe is a political communications campaign with a climate purpose that aims at cutting energy demand of the EU building stock by 80% by 2050, by means of renovation programmes and legislation. A [Renovate2Recover study](#)¹⁵ assesses the recovery plans of 18 Member States¹⁶ regarding their long-term goals in terms of deeper renovation and "whether NRRPs have the potential to be 'transformational' on the path to achieving national goals set out in the Long Term Renovation Strategies and EU goals set out in the Renovation Wave strategy".

Each [individual country profile](#) includes a general assessment concerning buildings and energy renovation investments in the national plans, as well as a supporting annex¹⁷ that broadly covers planned investments related to buildings and reforms within the climate goal, indicating their timeline and allocated amounts, whenever available.

[CEE Bankwatch Network RRF monitoring](#)



CEE Bankwatch Network is a network of grassroots, environmental and human rights groups in central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Russia. It covers assessments of national RRP with the aim to monitor the sustainable responsibility of public finance institutions. Assessments of RRF measures are available for 8 Member States ([Estonia](#), [Poland](#), [Slovakia](#), [Romania](#), [Latvia](#), [Czech Republic](#), [Hungary](#) and [Bulgaria](#)).

¹⁵ Full study [here](#): 'How Transformational are the National Recovery Plans for Buildings Renovation?' conducted by [E3G](#) (independent European climate change think tank), 13 October 2021.

¹⁶ Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain.

¹⁷ Each annex is drawn from an analysis of the COM's assessment and the Council's Implementing Decision for each NRRP.

The organisation also published a more comprehensive [report](#) (20 May 2021) on ten central and eastern European (CEE) countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia), which outlines the poor status of biodiversity in these Member States and how the RRF can be used to address this issue.

The CEE Bankwatch Network also publishes blog posts that discuss green transition progress in different countries. For instance, these blog entries comment on the approaches of [Bulgaria](#) and [Poland](#). In a [press release](#) from February 2022, it also highlights on how “efforts by Member States to direct spending from the RRF towards climate action are being undermined by investments that are likely to harm the environment and climate”, based on a [report](#) that analyses how progress in the green transition is held back in 10 RRP.

A recent [publication](#) by CEE Bankwatch in collaboration with [Euronatur](#) revolves around the implementation of recovery funds and sheds light on a series of harmful reforms and investments for biodiversity set to be financed in 9 Member States (Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania and Slovenia). The report shows the lack of measures to support biodiversity, harmful projects, the application of the ‘do no significant harm’ principle and the involvement of civil society during the process, and draws conclusions on what can still be saved.

[ZOE Institute’s Recovery Index for Transformative Change \(RITC\)](#)



ZOE Institute, in partnership with the New Economics Foundation, developed the Recovery Index for Transformative Change (RITC) to assess whether Member States’ RRP will contribute to the transformation of society. Using the RITC, ZOE Institute has assessed 13 Member States’ RRP and the potentials and risks of the investments and reforms within using criteria for natural world, a just transition and systemic change. Individual assessments on [Austria](#), [Belgium](#), [Denmark](#), [France](#), [Germany](#), [Italy](#), [Latvia](#), [Poland](#), [Portugal](#), [Slovakia](#), [Slovenia](#) and [Spain](#) are available.

The institute also published a [report](#) that presents the assessment methodology and results of a sector-level analysis in 13 Member States (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain) and specifies which measures take a more transformative approach. It also explains why and how some measures need improvements to comply with the guidance from the Commission and to contribute to overarching strategic goals, such as the European Green Deal or the Sustainable Development Goals. A more recent [report](#) draws lessons from the RRF and proposes reforms on the EU fiscal framework.

[Follow the Money](#)



Follow the Money is a joint media platform for investigative journalism that has launched a pan-European research project¹⁸ entitled [Recovery Files](#), which focuses on investigating the RRF funds, together with several journalists across Europe¹⁹. In the project’s [first article](#) (3 November 2021), the authors have shared their [concern](#) about the limited involvement of national parliaments in the elaboration of national RRP, particularly taking into consideration the sizable amounts mobilised by the RRF (EUR 723.8 billion). Another [article](#) (9 February 2022) comments on the Commission’s lack of transparency by “refusing to disclose hundreds of documents”. In a recent [interview](#) (6 March 2022), Céline Gauer, the head of the Recovery and Resilience Task Force at the European Commission answered questions about the RRF. As mentioned earlier, she emphasised the important role of stakeholders, like regions, in the national plans because through their involvement, it can

¹⁸ Supported by [U4EU](#), fund for cross-border investigative journalism in Europe.

¹⁹ Meet the team of journalists [here](#).

be ensured that national plans reflect the needs of people. She also highlighted that with regards to the RRF regulation, there was no lobbying by any sector and that even though the RRF money needs to be repaid, member states were appreciative of it and they were part of the decision on RRF. Another [article](#) (2 March 2022) delves into how the road transport and automotive industry received the biggest investments from RRF. Even though France and Germany for example made use of RRF for hybrid cars, hybrids release more carbon-dioxide than previously indicated and rely more on the combustion engine than expected. This implies reliance on fossil fuel use which can further extend dependency on Russian oil and gas.

A recently published [report](#) (29 June 2022) looks into how Member States made it “*virtually impossible*” to check how the money from the Recovery and Resilience Facility is spent and who benefits from it. Research shows that the risk associated with fraud and corruption in handling EU funds is above average, nonetheless public scrutiny of these funds can be avoided as the legal basis of the RRF does not provide an obligation for Member States to publish the beneficiaries of the RRF.

[BusinessEurope Reform Barometer 2022](#)



BusinessEurope published the [Reform Barometer](#) on 23 March 2022. The report first looks into the structural and long-term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the EU economy in comparison with other major developed economies. The second chapter analyses the results of a survey of BusinessEurope’s member federations on the Covid-19 pandemic together with Member State’s implementation of the national recovery plans under the RRF. The involved federations also commented on the appropriateness of each of the Commission’s country-specific recommendations of the 2020 European Semester and the governments’ efforts to implement them. The [answers](#) by the member federations of BusinessEurope on individual country recommendations is also publicly available. The report also highlights reform priorities for 2022 observed by BusinessEurope’s member federations. These primarily include reforms to increase the efficiency of the public sector and reforms to the tax system. Wage bargaining and wage-setting policies were also given priority due to the high inflation. Such policies could ensure the maintenance of a skilled labour force at competitive wages and at a macro-economic level.

[European Trade Union Confederation](#)



ETUC has established a [monitoring platform](#) covering trade union involvement in the drafting and implementation of RRFs. According to [ETUC](#) “*the RRF and next Semester cycles have to be a “game changer” to convert the EU into an economy that ensures growth, jobs and environmental sustainability. The correlation between the #EU_SDG8 and indicators of green sustainability should help identify concrete measures for a just transition. Such Just Transition Framework should (1) guarantee that just transition strategies are developed in all sectors and regions through social dialogue and collective bargaining, (2) guarantee worker’s right to information, consultation and participation, especially in case of restructuring processes and decarbonisation plans, (3) guarantee individual’s right to training and worker’s participation in the design of training programmes, and (4) secure sufficient investments as well as develop industrial strategies to create alternative quality job opportunities.*”

[Open Government Partnership](#)



OGP follows the idea that an open government “*is more accessible, more responsive, and more accountable to citizens, and that improving the relationship between people and their government has long-term, exponential benefits for everyone*”. It aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. OGP organised a [seminar](#) last November (main conclusions [here](#)) with “*representatives from EU institutions and member states, European and national civil society, media, think tanks, and academia to discuss why and how to embed open government values of transparency, accountability, and participation into the EU’s Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) and*

national spending plans". A roundtable was organised in March 2022 discussing "how European governments and institutions, as well as civil society, can apply open government values to the implementation of the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility for a more fair, effective recovery" (main ideas and recommendations can be found [here](#)).

Open Spending EU Coalition



The Open Spending EU Coalition aims to "ensure that government spending is done fairly, openly, efficiently, and creates the best value for money and best outcomes for Europe."

An [analysis](#) from June, 2021 shows that the Recovery and Resilience Facility is at risk due to the lack of transparency. The analysis looked at 22 NRRPs and found that 20 countries are not planning to release information about the recipients of the funds. The analysis also found that just one country (Sweden) has committed to publishing audit reports and its reporting back to the European Commission. A further concern is that the information will not be available from the European Commission.

In August 2021, the Open Spending EU Coalition in its [publication](#) urged Poland and Hungary to include strong guarantees of transparency in their NRRPs and called on the European Commission to ensure that such transparency is clearly stated before the approval of the plans.

In February, 2022 the Open Spending EU Coalition published a [whitepaper](#) on opening up Recovery and Resilience Facility Spending. The whitepaper provides guidance to Member States on how to achieve transparency of the RRF spending. It provides support the European Commission and Member States in establishing the right mechanisms for monitoring. The Open Spending EU Coalition has come up with concrete and practical recommendations which focus on exactly what should be published proactively, and how this information can be published to facilitate multi-stakeholder participation and monitoring.

4. Recent survey on the involvement of national parliaments

The European Parliament services, in cooperation with the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD - Area of Interest "Economic and Budgetary Affairs") and with staff working in national parliaments, including in the secretariat of the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs (COSAC), conducted a [survey](#) on the parliamentary dimension of the NGEU/RRF. It aimed at gathering information on how national parliaments are dealing with the RRF and, in particular, on whether and how national parliaments are scrutinising the implementation of the RRFs. 24 Parliaments sent their replies.²⁰ The questionnaire also asked whether national governments share information with respective parliaments on the achievement of milestones and targets identified in the RRFs and if and to what extent stakeholders, such as social partners and national fiscal institutions, are part of the parliamentary scrutiny.

With regard to **the involvement of national parliaments** in the scrutiny process, all the national parliaments covered replied that they are involved in scrutinising the implementation of the RRFs, although only one Member State (Portugal) had set up a specific Committee in this respect. For the majority (13), the main Committee in charge is the Committee on Budget or Finance, while for 6 the main Committee is the one on EU affairs. 8 parliaments involve 3 or more Committees in the monitoring exercise: this is the approach followed also by the European Parliament, and is very consistent with the wide range of policies that the RRF tries to address. 13 parliaments passed specific legislation related to the RRF, either general

²⁰ AT - BE - CY - CZ - DE - DK - EE - EL - ES - FI - HR - HU - IE - IT - LT - LU - LV - NL - PL - PT - RO - SE - SK - SI

(budget laws) or linked to the reforms and investments indicated in their national RRP; five Parliaments adopted less powerful instruments, e.g. resolutions or opinions.

The majority, 13 national parliaments out of the 24, have **established practices** for the Government to present progress (including risks) on the implementation of the RRP. Most parliaments are also planning to monitor the actual achievement of the RRP implementation, notably of the quantitative targets. 7 parliaments intend to monitor specific projects, also requesting the government to provide impact assessments and ex-post evaluations.

The replies show that more than half²¹ of the parliaments **have been informed by their Governments of risks of not achieving milestones and targets**. Nevertheless, such presentations cover information on payment requests only in 4 cases. 21 national parliaments (87%) reported that there is no legal obligation for the Government to submit the payment requests, nor the related assessments by the Commission, to the national parliament. Only 21% of the national Governments of the responding parliaments have provided information on the implementation of RRP in other EU Member States.

12 national parliaments intend to consult stakeholders as part of their scrutiny of the RRF implementation; such stakeholders include social partners (8), local and regional representatives (9), independent fiscal institutions/productivity boards (6) and other stakeholders (6).

According to the replies to the survey, 92% of the national parliaments reported that their government has informed them on coordination between national actions taken under the RRF and other EU budgetary programmes (e.g. EU structural funds).

71% of the national parliaments have been provided with information on the achievement of milestones and targets contributing to the implementation of the 2019 and 2020 Country Specific Recommendations.

Only 47% of the national parliaments from the Euro Area have been informed by their Government about the Commission's [assessment on their Draft Budgetary Plans for 2022](#), which had been submitted by the Government to the Commission in autumn 2021.

58% of the national parliaments intend to monitor the progress of the achievements in the RRP implementation of the quantitative targets. 62% of the national parliaments reported that they do not intend to scrutinize the financing and realization of specific RRP projects.

Overall, parliaments seem quite involved in the monitoring of the implementation of RRP, and their role might increase with time, also based on further information regarding the achievements of targets and milestones identified in their national RRP.

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²¹ It is worth noting that percentages refer to the total of responding national parliaments. However in the case of two replies from one and the same Member State due to bicameral system, these replies have been combined.