

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

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Energy efficiency (EE) is one of the pillars upon which the European Union is building its climate and energy strategy. While Member States (MSs) are struggling to comply with the existing Energy Efficiency Directive (EED) that mandates a 20% reduction of primary energy consumption by 2020, the European Commission is already engaged in defining an even more ambitious goal for 2030, aiming for a 30% reduction in energy consumption. However, strategic targets of this kind require the presence of a set of institutional, human, financial and political endowments to be implemented effectively. As for many other EU targets, EE instruments can vary considerably among MSs, reducing the ability of each country to comply with EED obligations. By analysing a series of indicators, Guillermo Ivan Pereira and Patricia Pereira da Silva from the University of Coimbra, Portugal, shed light on the governance capacities for EE at the EU and MS level.

Pereira and da Silva define qualitative and quantitative indicators measuring the existing governance capacity for each MS developed as a response to the EU initiatives to promote EE at three levels of intervention: strategic, legislative and support. The researchers evaluate the presence (and composition where possible) of the institutional structures, the financial and human resource capacity and the political support for EE measures for each MS and therefore assess the effectiveness of the governance framework for EE. The analysis shows that MSs can be clustered into three groups with three top performing countries (Cyprus, Denmark and Italy) and three laggards showing low governance score (Greece, Romania and Slovenia). The remaining 22 countries display a medium governance performance. Interestingly, the presence of EE-specific funds is only available in 18 MSs, while Belgium, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta and Sweden do not have such a fund, confirming the complexity of implementing EE measures, with disparities in implementation that go well beyond the usual north-south divide in the EU.

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