

Policy Recommendations: Climate Change Policy Integration at the Subnational Level in Italy and Austria

Reflections on the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano
and *Länder* Vorarlberg and Tyrol

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Recommended Citation:

Cittadino F., Meier A. (Editors), Policy Recommendations: Climate Change Policy Integration at the Subnational Level in Italy and Austria, Bolzano, Italy: Eurac Research, 2022

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DOI 10.57749/5b00-7422

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The **fight against climate change is increasingly a matter of subnational interest**, both for the effects climate change produces at the subnational and local levels and because subnational governments have powers to address some of the challenges posed by climate change in relation to mitigation and adaptation.

Within the framework of the research project ‘Climate change integration in the multilevel governance of Italy and Austria: policy-making and implementation in selected subnational policies’ (Research Südtirol/Alto Adige 2019), financed by the Autonomous Province of Bolzano, this document presents a **collection of policy recommendations**, i.e. a non-exhaustive list of actions recommended with the purpose to facilitate the integration of climate change in sectoral policies at subnational level. The recommendations are intended as suggested avenues to guide sectoral climate policy integration especially for the subnational governments analyzed in the research project, i.e. the two Autonomous Provinces of **Trento** and **Bolzano** and the two Austrian *Länder* of **Vorarlberg** and **Tyrol**. However, since problems to be solved are clearly identified, recommendations could be used as a benchmark for action also for other subnational governments with similar problems and similar institutional frameworks. Indeed, none of the suggested policy recommendation must be intended as a magic recipe for achieving climate policy integration, but they should be further evaluated by the administrations concerned and adapted to specific conditions, such as the political context and the political will to address the problem, the concrete capacity of the administrations concerned, the political opportunity to realize the suggested course of action, as well as the balance with other desirable societal goals. Notwithstanding these caveats, however, these policy recommendations are intended to sustain and to accelerate climate action in the context of a climate emergency that needs immediate responses.

The recommendations have been elaborated based on the input of the project researchers, the introductory desk research and the results of the selected expert interviews, conducted with 39 institutional respondents and members of the civil society organizations in the territories of analysis from June to November 2021.

Recommendations are organized by the main dimension or factor of climate policy integration interested by the suggested action. These dimensions are (1) **coordination** (the existence of formal or informal mechanisms of vertical or horizontal coordination among policy-makers), (2) **participation** (the level of involvement of civil society in decision-making) and **information** (the extent to which the public is informed about climate related initiatives and the quality of information), (3) **leadership** (the level of engagement or policy initiative on the part of political leaders or administrative officers in charge of climate related matters), and (4) **funding** (the extent to which there is dedicated funding to support climate initiatives). Each recommendation further indicates the title of the action, the sector of interest (with most of the recommendations having a cross-cutting scope and a few concerning transport and spatial planning), the additional dimension(s) concerned (if any), the problem that the recommendation wishes to address, the description of the recommendation itself, and the added value of the proposed course of action.

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1 Coordination

Policy Recommendation 1

Enhanced vertical coordination on climate matters

Additional dimension: Leadership

Sector: Cross-cutting

Main problem: Climate change is a cross-sectoral policy field that intersects with policy areas that are usually shared between different levels of government. Yet vertical coordination mechanisms are either insufficient or not specifically focusing on climate matters.

Recommendation: Lobby for the creation, in collaboration with the national level, of a permanent national body where climate related policies can be discussed among representatives of national, subnational and local governments and administrations.

Policy-making in the field of climate change is a complex undertaking because the protection of climate intersects with a number of subject matters either that are shared between the national and subnational levels or where subnational governments are entitled to exercise legislative and executive competences. This is the case in Italy for policies in the field of transport, energy and spatial planning, while in Austria even environmental protection is considered a transversal matter. For this reason, it seems crucial to establish vertical coordinating bodies where national, subnational (regions, Autonomous Provinces and *Länder*) and, whenever necessary for the matters discussed, local representatives can periodically meet to discuss both policy developments and policy implementation. This is the case for Austria, which has created (1) the National Climate Protection Committee (*Nationales Klimaschutzkomitee*), a coordination body mandated to supervise the implementation of the Austrian national climate law, and is composed also of relevant non-governmental stakeholders, and (2) the Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning (*Österreichische Raumordnungskonferenz – ÖROK*), composed of all federal ministers and heads of the *Länder*, the presidents of the Austrian Association of Cities and Towns (*Städtebund*) and the Austrian Association of Municipalities (*Gemeindebund*), as well as relevant social and economic organizations. The Italian system of State-Region conferences is not comparable to these mechanisms both when it comes to its mandate and concerning their actual functioning. Such vertical coordination bodies could play a role also in the monitoring of the implementation of climate-related policies, jointly identifying gaps, responsibilities and solutions to reverse inaction.

Added value: Prevention of conflicts and more effective implementation of climate targets.

Policy Recommendation 2

Enhanced horizontal coordination between departments

Additional dimension: Leadership

Sector: Cross-cutting

Main problem: Interviews have highlighted that horizontal coordination on climate matters among climate-related departments at subnational level is not sufficiently institutionalized and depends too much on the level of engagement of departmental heads or policy officers, the quality of personal/professional relations among policy officers from different departments and ad hoc practices.

Recommendation: Enhance departmental exchange on climate matters through institutionalized but also flexible coordination mechanisms, such as coordination units, stable working groups and recurring roundtables.

Climate change is a pervasive policy field that influences and is influenced by developments/targets/objectives/punctual measures in other policy fields. For this reason, horizontal coordination among climate-related departments, such as environmental agencies, mobility, energy, territorial planning departments and others where relevant, needs to be made a structural feature of both policy-making and policy implementation in the field of climate protection. To this end, regularly scheduled meetings and frequent exchange of information between policy officers would facilitate the coordination of actions. This can be achieved for instance through recurring roundtables and discussion rounds among relevant department heads, with the inclusion of selected policy officers when appropriate. Additional examples of more structured coordination processes are both/either the creation of dedicated climate coordination units (a responsible person or a group of responsible persons) within each relevant department of the administration and/or the creation of independent coordination agencies that would facilitate exchange among different departments. Giving coordination roles to existing environmental departments (similarly to the Italian cases) is also a possible solution. This solution would however need to be complemented by measures to ensure that sufficient coordination powers are conferred to these departments to achieve meaningful exchange and coordination, such as either the creation of coordination units in other departments to ensure that dedicated resources are required to cooperate or the institutionalization of recurrent coordination meetings with other departments. These meetings for instance could be required when larger and more important projects with effects on climate policies are under elaboration. In all cases, defined persons in charge could also simplify and speed up ad hoc exchanges between affected departments. Coordination functions in implementation and monitoring of climate-related policies, plans and projects is also an essential aspect of effectively enhancing horizontal coordination. Therefore, coordination efforts, regular meetings and exchange between coordination units must be maintained in the whole policy process, from elaboration to concrete realization.

Added value: More efficient and stable coordination and therefore more pervasive climate-related policies; prevention of negative externalities from one policy field to the other.

Policy Recommendation 3

Mitigation and adaptation as a single strategy

Additional dimension: Leadership

Sector: Cross-cutting

Main problem: Adaptation policies are lagging behind in almost all of the territories analyzed. The lack of appropriate adaptation policies is an issue in the context of the already visible effects of global warming and the increase in numbers and intensity of extreme events in the Alpine areas of interest. At the same time, mitigation efforts cannot be abandoned.

Recommendation: Jointly plan and implement mitigation and adaptation policies.

Mitigation and adaptation need to be thought of in a combined way and to be carried out in synergistic ways. While mitigation objectives and actions to limit climate change to a 2.0 °C, preferably 1.5°C, increase in global temperatures still need to be properly implemented, adaptation cannot be postponed and must be accelerated. This means that measures focusing on reducing vulnerabilities, increasing resilience and contrasting the negative impacts of climate change must be included in all subnational planning processes, both in general plans on climate change and in sectoral plans. In particular, adaptation might contribute to compensate for the inevitable effects of climate change, since temperatures have already risen and consequences of that are already visible. Furthermore, both mitigation and adaptation actions must be based on best available science. This means that a continuous exchange with climatologists, physicians, biologists, engineers, social scientists (sociologists, lawyers and economists) and experts of policy-making is in order, while at the same time scientific uncertainty cannot constitute an excuse not to act promptly (precautionary principle). Participation of the general public both to help identify vulnerabilities and to contribute to monitoring is also required (see [policy recommendation 6](#)). A good example/starting point of integration of mitigation and adaptation policies is represented by the ongoing formulation of the general strategy for climate change by the Autonomous Province of Trento (*Strategia Provinciale di Mitigazione e Adattamento ai Cambiamenti Climatici*). The strategy aims to address mitigation and adaptation in the same policy document, going beyond the approach of separated policy objectives and towards a synergistic direction.

Added value: More complementary measures in the areas of mitigation and adaptation, and increased resilience to climate impacts.

Policy Recommendation 4

Establishment of local territorial networks assisted by upper levels

Additional dimensions: Information, leadership, funding

Sectors: Cross-cutting, spatial planning, transport, energy

Main problem: Small municipalities usually do not have the right skills, human resources and knowledge to implement effective actions and policies in the field of climate change, although their initiative is fundamental especially for the implementation of climate actions in the field of urban planning, land-use and road traffic.

Recommendation: Establish territorial networks among municipalities to share expertise and knowledge, and to pool resources among local administrations.

In many cases, small municipalities and local administrations do not have the capacity and expertise to implement effective solutions relating to climate change and its integration into sectoral policies. A proposed solution is to create the conditions for small municipalities to work together with the assistance (financial and administrative) of the upper levels of government, especially the subnational one (regions, Autonomous Provinces and *Länder*). Small municipalities, in the same area and with similar characteristics in terms of climate challenges to be faced, should be given the possibility to create territorial networks, for example through consortia of municipalities. These consortia would facilitate mutual learning from one another, as well as constituting a way to pool the necessary resources to address climate change in terms of mobilizing expertise and financial resources. These consortia could also favor the coordination of planning activities in light of climate change objectives with a view to aligning both mitigation and adaptation measures in urban plans and local planning more generally. An improved collaboration and exchange between municipalities could lead to a homogeneous implementation of climate objectives and the planning of larger projects. Consortia could also receive assistance from the upper levels of government, and in particular by the subnational one, in terms of communication of best available knowledge on the climate concerns related to the interested areas, consultation about the policy options to be implemented locally, and financial support of specific activities that have recognized positive climate impacts. A similar model of collaboration and exchange involving the national, subnational and local levels of government is represented in Austria by the e5 program, whereby municipalities are provided with consultancy and certification services to realize actions that contribute to energy transition and climate protection.

Added value: Enhanced local capacity to address climate change, and increased exchange of best practices and mutual learning.

Policy Recommendation 5

Enhanced cross-border coordination

Additional dimensions: Leadership, funding

Sector: Cross-cutting

Main problem: Cross-border cooperation on climate matters in the Alpine area is not fully developed, since it is either limited to a programmatic level (EUSALP), is based on specific projects (Interreg) or mainly refers to specific policy areas (mainly transport).

Recommendation: Improve cooperation on climate matters within the EGTC Euregio and in other cross-border contexts.

The Alpine area is facing similar climate-related challenges in terms of modification of the Alpine environment, the melting of permanent glaciers, water scarcity and others. Even though existing cross-border strategies, such as the EUSALP, have integrated climate protection into their agenda and provide useful exchange forums, the shared objectives need to be better implemented and followed up. Concrete joint measures are usually only implemented on the basis of projects (e.g. Interreg projects). Enhanced cooperation is also limited to particular regions, the EGTC Euregio, and particular policy sectors, i.e. transport. Even within the context of Euregio, cooperation on climate change is limited to the broad topics of sustainability and mobility and transportation, without a specific focus area of cooperation on energy matters or adaptation to climate change. The thematic focus on climate change of Euregio should be therefore reinforced, both with specific projects and with periodic roundtables and exchange on these matters. In this way, shared problems could be identified, synergies could be recognized, and joint solutions could be found. Extended collaboration in the Alpine area could be carried out also through a more extensive involvement of subnational administrations in Interreg projects, which would lead to an expanded knowledge exchange. For this to happen, more human resources would need to be hired to work on cooperation projects, since one of the main difficulties of administrative personnel in this respect is that they do not have enough time to dedicate to additional tasks beyond ordinary administration.

Added value: More coherent policy approach to common problems across borders and mutual learning.

2 Participation and information

Policy Recommendation 6

More inclusive, more accountable and better structured participatory processes

Additional dimension: Funding

Sector(s): Cross-cutting

Main problem: Criteria to select participants in public participation processes in the field of climate change are not always transparent, and participation is usually reserved to organized or professional groups. In addition, participants do not usually receive feedback on whether and how their contribution is integrated in final decision-making, thus generating mistrust in participation.

Recommendation: Improve the structure of participatory processes with full disclosure of information, meaningful feedback and participation in monitoring.

The structure of participatory processes must be improved to ensure the involvement of a greater pool of actors and an increased accountability of the decision-making process within participatory mechanisms. To broaden the pool of potential participants, information asymmetries that prevent participation should be addressed before starting the participatory process. This means both targeting information to different audiences (see [policy recommendation 7](#), [8](#) and [9](#)) and investing more funds in communication (see [policy recommendation 15](#)), in order to translate technical details into understandable background information for participants. In some cases of binding participatory processes, legislators should consider whether to amend the list of concerned stakeholders to include also individuals or a larger pool of civil society organizations, such as environmental and territorial associations, as well as social movements. Concerning accountability, decision-making processes should be opened to the (interested) public at a very early stage, thus foreseeing an engagement of the public not only in the final phase of the approval of plans/strategies/measures, but during the elaboration of these documents. Engagement should furthermore be ensured for the implementation and monitoring of the same measures, by providing information and allowing for an exchange throughout the whole policy process. Accountability should be enhanced also when it comes to the way in which inputs from participants are integrated in the decision-making process. Participatory processes should have a clear policy, shared with participants, on the actual space of influence of civil society in the decision-making process. Participants need to be sufficiently informed not only on the extent to which their proposals have been retained in final decisions/plans, but also on the rationale behind the exclusion of their requests. Increased accountability in this sense would make participatory processes more credible and more attractive for a broader pool of participants. A final element to increase trust in participatory processes is the presence of independent professional facilitators that would help carry out the participatory process in the most inclusive way possible. These should be either hired ad hoc from independent consultancies or integrated in a more stable way in the administration (ex. office on participation present in the Autonomous Province of Trento or in *Land Vorarlberg*).

Added value: More predictable and more attractive participation for an enlarged pool of participants; increased role of participation in meaningful climate policy integration.

Policy Recommendation 7

Increased and more targeted involvement of under 30s in decision-making

Additional dimension: Funding

Sector: Cross-cutting

Main problem: Interviews conducted in the study areas highlighted the difficulty of reaching out to young people and involving them in decision-making in the field of climate change.

Recommendation: Promote increased, targeted and improved social media presence, as well as events specifically designed for youth (under 30s).

In order to increase youth participation, public authorities should, first, improve information related to climate matters targeted to this kind of audience and, second, rethink participatory processes to include more youth representatives. Concerning information, the social media presence of the public administration on platforms that are mostly used by youth, such as TikTok and Instagram, should be reinforced so that the existence of participatory processes and related information are communicated through these platforms. To this end, content should be adapted to the formats of the social platforms considered. Furthermore, communication should be adapted to youth needs also on more traditional social media and information channels. In this sense, the language used and the design of documents must be particularly taken care of. Additionally, to improve information, special events would need to be designed for young people, or at least parts of events would need to be made more interesting for such people. In all cases, it would be easier to reach young people if young people were involved in the marketing of climate information and in the organization of events, thus contributing their own experiences and interests. Furthermore, more funds need to be channeled to address these specific communication needs, for instance to finance the position of an expert on communication within the administration or to consult experts on specific campaigns. Regarding the design of participatory processes, public authorities should improve participation channels by: (a) enhancing the possibility of online participation and making it more interactive; (b) allowing youth associations and movements to participate in decision-making processes (for example by funding their participation and establishing contact with their leaders); and (c) contrasting the possible gaps to participation related to gender, language skills, mobility, cultural and economic possibilities, etc. (see [policy recommendation 8](#)). Early engagement, independent facilitators and feedback on the results of the participatory processes are also elements that may improve youth participation, as well as general participation (see [policy recommendation 6](#)).

Added value: Increased engagement of younger generations in public decision-making in the field of climate change and a greater representation of societal needs.

Policy Recommendation 8

More targeted information for marginalized groups

Additional dimension: Funding

Sector: Cross-cutting

Main problem: Climate change is a very complex subject that is usually not communicated in a suitable and targeted manner to the public. In particular, some strata of the population – the most marginalized – might have special communication needs that must be specifically addressed. These information asymmetries end up creating obstacles to effective participation in decision-making.

Recommendation: Increase the quality of available information and target it to different audiences, especially marginalized groups.

Although there is an overwhelming availability of information on climate change at different levels (international, EU, national, *Land*/Province), it is often not suitably prepared to adequately inform specific sectors of the public. In addition, experiences of the effects of climate change differ, and marginalized communities in particular experience climate change effects disproportionately compared to better off groups. Brief, targeted information about specific problems affecting the population in the region of reference, combined with concrete proposals for action and possibly opportunities for active participation or for the population to contribute its own proposals for solutions, could improve the existing situation. In order to reach the population in the best possible way, thereby promoting active participation and willingness to implement measures in daily life, all media channels should be used and the information should be adapted to the respective target groups. A priority should be to inform and engage marginalized groups that have been mostly neglected so far, such as children (see [policy recommendation 9](#)) and youth (see [policy recommendation 7](#)), the elderly (often lacking internet access and needing more targeted communication in traditional media), immigrants (often experiencing language barriers) and the economically disadvantaged (that might have limited access to the internet or might need economic incentives to participate). These strata of society most likely have specific knowledge or needs to contribute that would address issues of social justice in climate policies.

Added value: Broader pool of participants that reflect diversity in society and may raise attention on inequalities that are usually not addressed in climate policies.

Policy Recommendation 9

Climate protection as part of youth education programs

Sector(s): Cross-cutting

Main problem: Young people are important multipliers to advance changes in individual and societal behaviors. Yet, education about the consequences and the governance of climate change has been implemented only in special projects and initiatives, thus reaching a small group of youth representatives and children.

Recommendation: In line with subnational powers in educational matters, develop suitable teaching materials as well as stable training programs for schools, at all education levels, and extracurricular educational activities.

Climate protection should become an essential part of education from an early age. Children can thus be educated about climate-friendly lifestyles at a very young age – which they may then also pass on to their families. School projects and initiatives could also be implemented to make climate protection fun to learn and sustainable to integrate into the actions of children and families. Due to the complexity of the subject matter, it is essential that each level of education is provided with the suitable material and information. For this, appropriate training or continuing education must be provided for teaching staff, as well as appropriate teaching materials for the respective school levels. Extracurricular activities or field trips could also be used to teach students about climate protection. For example, companies active in climate protection or areas where the consequences of climate change are visible could be visited during school trips.

Added value: Contribution to changes in lifestyles that are more in line with climate protection objectives; more awareness of young people, from an early age, possibly leading to increased youth participation in decision-making (see [policy recommendation 7](#)).

Policy Recommendation 10

Increased awareness-raising and training initiatives for the administration

Additional dimension: Coordination

Sector: Cross-cutting

Main problem: Climate protection is only part of the work of individual officers or departments, while there is no general awareness among employees of the administration.

Recommendation: Promote training courses on climate change for all employees of subnational administrations.

Some departments of subnational administration, which have little or no direct connection with climate change, have not integrated climate protection as a general guiding principle for action. In order to achieve this comprehensive consideration of climate protection in all departments and decisions (see also [policy recommendation 11](#)), training all public employees in all departments is necessary. Consideration of climate protection should be an integral part of training programs for all employees of subnational administrations. This can be done through several initiatives, such as a welcome climate-training for all new employees of the administration, further regular internal training opportunities accessible to all employees, including with regard to the core contents of the subnational climate protection strategies/targets also in specific policy fields, as well as individual vouchers for external training in this area, especially for those employees that are more concerned with climate-related policies and have considerable decision-making powers in this field (ex. heads of office).

Added value: Improved consideration of climate impacts in all projects, plans, measures and decisions.

3 Leadership

Policy Recommendation 11

Binding legal targets related to climate change

Additional dimension: Coordination

Sector: Cross-cutting

Main problem: At national and regional level, long-term climate targets are usually incorporated only in nonbinding policy documents, thus making them subject to changes.

Recommendation: Adopt binding requirements at the subnational (provincial/*Land*) level in matters where subnational entities have legislative and administrative competences (especially spatial planning, buildings, road law and others).

Although climate targets are binding by virtue of European directives and regulations, it would be a clear sign of leadership to incorporate these targets in binding acts also at the subnational level. This can be realized either through the adoption of a subnational climate law (such as that of the Province of Trento), especially in the absence of national climate laws, or through the incorporation of long-term targets into binding planning documents, such as land-use plans or plans for water use and water protection. While the second suggested course of action is a more fragmented and demanding approach, a climate law could clearly set the targets for all climate-related sectors within the competence of subnational administrations. However, while a law is certainly more easily justiciable if standards are not respected, a subnational climate law runs the risk of not being flexible enough to adapt to the necessary changes required by an evolution of climate science or political opportunity. Moreover, a law could go beyond the division of competences set in the national and subnational constitutions/statutes, and therefore its validity risks to be contested before Constitutional Courts. It seems therefore more advisable, in case of preference for a climate law, to incorporate in this law only general targets, such as for instance the obligation to ensure climate protection through mitigation and adaptation actions, the commitment to realize a climate check for any further planning process related to climate change (see [policy recommendation 12](#)), or more operative provisions establishing specific horizontal coordination mechanisms for the subnational administration (see [policy recommendation 2](#)). Furthermore, even in the event of a climate law with general climate targets, more specific targets would in any event need to be elaborated in sectoral plans. Subnational laws can and must be combined with an articulation of targets in sectoral binding plans. When making these targets binding, it is also important to consider ways how to keep the necessary flexibility to promptly change these targets in case of international and European developments, scientific developments (see [policy recommendation 3](#)) and new societal needs (see [policy recommendation 6](#)).

Added value: More stable subnational targets that bind the administration in its action.

Policy Recommendation 12

Higher status of climate protection in the balance of interests

Additional dimension: Coordination

Sector: Cross-cutting

Main problem: Since climate protection depends on action in several policy fields, climate targets may be easily imperiled by incoherent or non-climate-neutral measures adopted to achieve different societal goals.

Recommendation: Give priority to climate protection in the balance of interests when the administration authorizes projects or passes new climate-related laws, so that no more climate-damaging developments are eligible for approval.

Even if climate change is already to be considered as an element in the balancing of interests in some project approval procedures (for instance environmental impact assessments – EIA), as a public interest it is on the same level with all other interests. This is even more true in the current situation of energy insecurity and simplified approval procedures foreseen in the context of the recovery and resilience plans adopted nationally. In order for climate-damaging projects to be no longer approvable, climate protection would have to be given a higher status. The acknowledgement of a higher status for climate protection can be done, for instance, through the declaration of a climate emergency (as done in Vorarlberg in 2019). However, the mere declaration would not suffice since its implications are far from clear. A possible mechanism to operationalize the declaration of an emergency could be for instance that climate-damaging projects should be altogether avoided and could only be approved if a specific justification in line with the public interest and based on urgent exceptional circumstances is provided for. Another way to operationalize the declaration would be to approve a binding climate check for new climate-related projects, plans and laws (as done in Vorarlberg in 2019 and Tyrol in 2022). The climate checklist, developed by *Land* Tyrol together with other *Länder* and the Federal Environment Agency, can be taken as a model as it constitutes a clear and simple tool to check laws for climate compatibility before they are passed in the *Land* parliament (*Landtag*). Even in the absence of a declaration of climate emergency, the climate check could be adopted as an instrument to evaluate the climate impacts of pending projects, plans and laws. A similar instrument in this direction is the energy and climate impact assessment procedure originally established by the Autonomous Province of Trento in its climate law (L.P. 5/2010, as amended by art. 1 L.P. 19/2013), which however concerns only projects under a certain dimension threshold and is not clearly distinguished from the EIA.

Added value: Climate protection as a central decision-making criterion for laws, plans and projects and consequent thorough evaluation of the climate consequences of actions that are not primarily aimed at climate protection, with a view to avoiding climate-damaging actions and maximizing the impact of non-climate measures.

Policy Recommendation 13

More climate-friendly transport options

Additional dimension: Funding

Sector: Transport

Main problem: Transport is still the sector with more GHG emissions in the areas analyzed. Yet there are limited and relatively expensive climate-friendly transport options, especially in remote areas.

Recommendation: Promote climate-friendly transport options that are accessible to all and ensure intermodality.

Making individual road transport more expensive and less attractive should be pursued by increasing cheaper and increased options for greener public mobility both within cities and for extra urban areas. In particular, when it comes to short-distance mobility, bikes should be made the most convenient and accessible means of transportation. In this sense, incentives to buy bikes and e-bikes could be increased to advance the use of these means of transportation. However, more structural interventions are in order, such as the funding of the expansion of bike lanes in a way that ensures more integration with public transport options (intermodality). Special care should be taken to best connect commercial areas and areas with public services (such as hospitals, medical care, public parks and others). Pavements should also be expanded, especially in small municipalities, to make more attractive pedestrian options. In order for bike lanes and pavements to be developed and expanded, it is necessary to reduce the amount of space taken up by roads. Bike lanes, furthermore, should be well connected to more long-distance public transport options, such as train and bus stations. For extra urban or remote areas, especially at higher altitudes, public transport should be integrated with flexible options of car-sharing with cleaner vehicles. For example, shared micro-mobility or the provision of e-buses or e-taxis, which can be used to travel cheaply to nearby areas, and volunteer drivers, e.g. pensioners, would be a viable option. These vehicles could also be rented out or used by the local administration employees when not in use by the public. Finally, investing in rail transport remains fundamental to promote climate-friendly long-distance mobility. Expanding areas covered by rail, when feasible, is encouraged. Providing for cheap options for rail transport is also advisable, not only to address the internal transport needs of the region considered, but also to make rail the preferred option for those traveling long distances for work or tourism reasons. In this sense, expanding initiatives such as the *Alto Adige/Südtirol* Pass to cover cross-border travel options with neighboring regions in Germany, Switzerland and Austria, would be highly recommended. The pass currently is a valid travel document to use all means of public transportation within South Tyrol, as well as to Innsbruck and Rovereto, whose logic is that travel fares become cheaper the more the pass is used.

Added value: Increased use of public transport or of transport options with less climate impacts.

4 Funding

Policy Recommendation 14

Dedicated climate change expenditure item in subnational budgets

Additional dimension: Coordination

Sector: Cross-cutting

Main problem: Climate-related funds are not clearly earmarked in subnational budgets and there is usually a lack of climate-dedicated funds, which generates a lack of transparency on concretely available funds, comparability of data, long-term evaluation of financial trends and coordination of measures.

Recommendation: Introduce a separate budget for climate protection at the subnational (provincial/*Land*) level or, alternatively, clearly earmarked climate funds within climate-related sectoral budgets (for instance, on transport, energy and spatial planning).

Sufficient available funding is essential to translate climate targets into concrete measures. The lack of climate dedicated funds, except for the Province of Trento, and the absence of clearly earmarked climate protection funds, either within the subnational budget on environmental issues or within other climate-related sectors, prevents public authorities from transparently account for public expenditure in this area. Furthermore, the lack of clearly earmarked funds is also an obstacle to comparability of financial data over the years and across sectors. Making these data more easily available would in contrast allow the public administration both to carefully plan climate-related measures and their financial backing and to coordinate with different sectoral departments to avoid possible overlapping of resources. Waste of resources would be also more easily visible, also on the part of the general public that would be able to check on climate-related expenditure and its evolution, and possibly demand for more financial commitment. Building on this, increased transparency in climate funding will also enable financial expenditure in climate matters to be better monitored and controlled. Through increased transparency and comparability, *Länder/Provinces* that spend less on climate change measures could be identified easily.

Added value: Contribution to an increased implementation of climate protection measures, enhanced transparency in public expenditure, simplified scrutiny of possible overlaps, gaps or wastes, and easier long-term planning of climate measures on the part of public authorities.

Policy Recommendation 15

Increased budget for information campaigns on climate change

Additional dimension: Information

Sector: Cross-cutting

Main problem: Information campaigns on climate change are insufficient, and they usually reach only the strata of the population that are already informed, active or engaged.

Recommendation: Increased budget for information campaigns on climate change, also with regard to the available options for funding climate relevant initiatives.

While there is a large amount of publicly available information and documents related to climate change (e.g. annual reports on climate change, climate related plans etc.), information usually has to be actively sought by citizens. Announcements or events in the field of climate protection can also be found on specific websites of the provincial/*Land* (subnational) governments, but these pieces of information only reach a limited number of people who are actively looking for it. In order to ensure the widest possible information in this area, more proactive information campaigns have to be greatly expanded, different media need to be used, and enhanced professionalization in the field of public relations is needed. To achieve this, it is necessary to increase the budget for public relations and awareness raising in this area, where existent, or to create a specific budget line for these kinds of awareness-raising actions. In order to appeal to younger people, more social media channels would also have to be used (see [policy recommendation 7](#)). These campaigns should concern also the available funding opportunities for subsidizing individual behavior that positively impact on climate mitigation, such as private incentives for sustainable mobility or building retrofitting.

Added value: More awareness for a broader pool of actors in the general public and, possibly, enhanced commitment to implement measures in daily lives. More information could possibly lead to more participation in decision-making (see [policy recommendation 6](#)).

Policy Recommendation 16

A user-friendly search tool for funding opportunities

Additional dimensions: Information, coordination

Sector: Cross-cutting

Main problem: The funding landscape for climate -related initiatives is extremely complex and difficult-to-navigate since it encompasses three levels: EU, national and subnational (Province/*Land*). While there are subsidies for many climate protection measures on all three levels, there are differences in the prerequisites and eligible services, which limits transparency and accessibility of funds.

Recommendation: Provide more coordinated information on climate-related funding in order for it to be more user-friendly; whenever possible, coordinate funding initiatives and criteria across levels.

One proposal for solving this problem would be to set up a user-friendly online search tool that combines all funding options – at least of the national and regional levels – and filters them according to some criteria (keywords, deadlines and others). For example, a search function could be used to find all subsidies on the topic of photovoltaics. This would provide insight at a glance into which subsidies are available from which body, the conditions under which these subsidies can be applied for, as well as exactly the range of measures that are subsidized. Since such an online platform would require a great deal of financial and human resources, also because the subsidies would have to be constantly updated, a simplification of the subsidy system could already be ensured by coordinating the subsidies at least at national and subnational levels through increased coordination within the existing coordination mechanisms or through dedicated coordination bodies on funding issues. Within these coordination bodies, national and subnational authorities could discuss ways how to design funds in a complementary manner and, possibly, to standardize some of the requirements to obtain funding. In this way, the bureaucratic burden on subsidy recipients would be reduced.

Added value: Increased and improved implementation of climate protection measures by individuals and the private sector, even on the part of people who would otherwise not have the capacity to actively search for possible funding.