Beyond the smoke: Building support for clean heating measures in Europe

20 October 2026

10:00-16:00 EEST
Event Space 2020, The *Small National Palace of Culture, 1 Bulgaria Blvd, Sofia, Bulgaria.*
In-person and livestream event. Bulgarian interpretation available.

This is the final conference of the project "Beyond the smoke: Building support for clean heating measures in Europe". The event will include presentations of key findings from work conducted across several European cities and will facilitate knowledge-sharing and dialogue among various actors on remaining gaps, scalable solutions and best practices to improve air quality and decarbonisation.

Register here

Agenda

Time	Session	Speaker
9:30 – 10:00	Registration – Welcome coffee	
	Introduction	**Chiara Antonelli** - Topic lead, Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP)
10:00	Welcome address	**Vassil Terziev** - Mayor of Sofia Municipality
10:10	Keynote speech	**Cecilia Vaca Jones** - Executive Director, Breathe Cities

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Our multidisciplinary team works with EU institutions, international organisations, business, academia, and civil society, providing integrated approaches and multiple perspectives across several research areas and amongst the three priorities: Nature and Sustainable Food Systems, Climate and Zero Pollution.

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10:40	Session 1: Presentation of main findings	**Chiara Antonelli** - Topic lead, IEEP
11:10	Q & A	
11:30	Coffee break	
11:50	Session 2: Deep dive into city case studies	Presentation by **Irene Chiocchetti** - Policy Analyst, IEEP Dialogue with **Marin Marinov** - Director of Sofia Air Quality Department
12:30	Q&A	
12:45	Networking lunch	
13:45	Panel session and Q&A Moderated by **Raya Lecheva** Journalist	• **Assoc. Prof. Angel Burov** - University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy • **Antoniya Novakova** – Project Manager, EnEffect • **Joel Boehme** – Campaign Manager, Clean Heat Europe, European Heat Pump Association
14:40	Interactive session with practitioners Moderated by **Florinda Boschetti** - Breathe Cities	• **Marin Marinov** - Sofia Municipality • **Fernando Del Valle** - Madrid Municipality • **Maria Wiśnicka** - Warsaw Municipality • **Manuela Ojan** – Milan Municipality

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15:40	Keynote concluding remarks	**Eng. Nikolay Nedelkov -** Deputy Mayor for Environment, Green System, and Ecology of Sofia Municipality
15:55	Wrap-up	**Chiara Antonelli -** Topic lead, IEEP
16:00	End of the Conference	

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About the event

The final conference of IEEP's project "Beyond the smoke: Building support for clean heating measures in Europe" aims to present key findings from work conducted across several European cities and to facilitate the dialogue among various EU stakeholders, city representatives, and civil society actors.

During the last 12 months, IEEP, in partnership with Clean Air Fund, has investigated the social aspects around the design and implementation of Low Emission Zones (LEZ) and associated measures for the heating sector in Europe.

The work conducted by IEEP includes:

1. A compendium of policy approaches addressing solid fuel use in EU Member States;
2. Four case studies about Sofia—the first EU city to introduce a residential heating LEZ- Utrecht, Krakow and Madrid;
3. A synthesis report analysing current status, progress, upcoming challenges and potential solutions in the sector.
4. The final event, held in Sofia, Bulgaria, seeks to promote the uptake of socially fair residential heating interventions to improve air quality and climate neutrality at city level.

By showcasing evidence and best practices from the project (including the final report, the four city case studies and the compendium), the event will enable participants to exchange experiences, identify policy gaps, reflect on lessons learned and discuss challenges in implementing EU frameworks.

A panel of experts from European institutions, research, business, and clean heating networks will share insights from their own work, followed by an interactive discussion with the audience. CSOs, local authorities, foundations and citizens' organisations will get a clearer understanding, increase their awareness and improve engagement on how to foster acceptance and uptake of fair and better climate, energy, and air quality policies.

The conference will also contribute to strengthening existing networks, e.g. Breathe Cities, and expanding engagement in Bulgaria.

For more information about the event, please contact cantonelli@ieep.eu

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Key documents

- Chiocchetti, I., Tang, A. M., & Antonelli, C. (2026). *Improving air quality with residential heating policies: A compendium of local approaches across Europe* (Policy report). Institute for European Environmental Policy.
- Institute for European Environmental Policy (2026). *Anti-smog resolution banning solid fuels for heating: Kraków case study*. (Briefing)
- Institute for European Environmental Policy (2026). *Low-emission zone in the heating sector: Sofia case study*. (Briefing)
- Institute for European Environmental Policy (2026). *Banning indoor wood burning: Utrecht case study*. (Briefing)
- Institute for European Environmental Policy (forthcoming). *Ban on coal-fired boilers: Madrid case study*. (Briefing)
- Antonelli, C.; Chiocchetti, I.; Tang, A.M. (forthecoming). *Handbook for practitioners*. Institute for European Environmental Policy.

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After the conference – city walking tour offered by Sofia Municipality

City Walking Tour by Visit Sofia- Discover the essential highlights of Sofia on a curated walk through its most emblematic landmarks. This complimentary tour, offered by Visit Sofia, provides an introduction to the city's ancient heritage, rich cultural layers and modern atmosphere, featuring key sites, lively squares and beautifully preserved architecture.

Duration: 1.45 hours to 2 hours

Capacity: each group up to 25 participants

Timing: 5 pm

Dates: 20 October 2026

Meeting point: *Event Space 2020, The Small National Palace of Culture, 1 Bulgaria Blvd, Sofia, Bulgaria*

Registration: City Walking Tour by Visit Sofia

Deadline:** To secure your place, **please register by Friday, 16 October at 17:00 CET



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