

29th April 2026

Re: Urgent finalisation and delivery of Ireland's Social Climate Plan

Dear Minister O'Brien, Minister Calleary, Minister Harris, and Minister Chambers,

We, the undersigned organisations, are writing to express our significant concern at the continued delay in submitting Ireland's Social Climate Plan to the European Commission.

As you are aware, the SCP is a central requirement under the EU's Social Climate Fund and will determine how Ireland supports households and communities in responding to rising energy and transport costs, particularly in the context of carbon pricing.

Recent parliamentary responses ([February 24th, 2026](#) and [Tuesday 21st April 2026](#)) indicate that the development of Ireland's Plan remains at an early stage. While we recognise the complexity of this process, we are concerned that continued delay risks undermining Ireland's preparedness at a time of rising energy price volatility and geopolitical instability, which continue to expose Europe's dependence on imported fossil fuels and drive up costs for households and businesses.

Under the Social Climate Fund framework, timely submission is directly linked to Ireland's ability to access and deploy EU funding from 2026. Although the European Commission has confirmed that a delayed submission will not lessen Ireland's ability to drawdown its full allocation from the Social Climate Fund over the lifetime of the Plan, delays at this crucial stage risk pushing the first drawdown of funds into 2027, with real consequences for the timing of supports available to vulnerable households and micro-enterprises. **In the current context, including ongoing volatility in global energy markets, the absence of a finalised Social Climate Plan leaves Ireland more reliant on reactive, short-term measures rather than a coordinated, forward-looking strategy.**

The ongoing delay has several implications.

- First, it **weakens Ireland's readiness to access and deploy EU funding in a timely way.** The Social Climate Fund is intended to support both immediate income measures and longer-term structural investments, including in home retrofits, clean heating, and sustainable mobility. Without a submitted and approved Plan, Ireland risks delays in mobilising these resources at the point they will be most needed.
- Second, it **prolongs uncertainty regarding how supports will be targeted and delivered.** The SCP provides a framework for identifying those most at risk of energy and transport poverty and for ensuring that interventions are designed accordingly. In its absence, there is a greater risk that measures will be less coordinated and less effective in reaching those who need them most. This is particularly concerning in a context where many households continue to face sustained pressure from high

energy costs, including those already experiencing energy poverty, those with additional needs, and groups and communities such as migrants, women, Travellers, and others who may experience disproportionate impacts. These groups often have limited capacity to reduce their reliance on fossil fuels or to access alternative supports.

- Third, and more fundamentally, it **delays the shift from short-term crisis response to longer-term resilience**. The purpose of the Social Climate Fund is not only to cushion the immediate impacts of carbon pricing, but to reduce exposure to future shocks by supporting structural change. A late Plan risks postponing these benefits.

We are also **concerned about the governance dimension of this delay**. The development of the SCP presents an important opportunity to demonstrate a whole-of-government approach, grounded in transparency, clear timelines, and meaningful stakeholder engagement. At present, there is limited public visibility on the structure, timeline, and development process for Ireland's Plan. Publishing a draft SCP and allowing stakeholders to engage with its full content, including targeting, financing, and implementation, will be critical to ensuring compliance with Commission guidance and building public trust.

As Ireland prepares for its upcoming Presidency of the Council of the European Union, this issue takes on additional significance. Ireland has consistently emphasised the importance of a just transition, social fairness and a commitment to meaningful public and civil society participation at EU level. Timely and credible delivery of Ireland's own Social Climate Plan will be essential to underpin this leadership.

We also note that the Government-appointed Just Transition Commission has also [identified the development and implementation of Ireland's Social Climate Plan as an immediate priority](#) and a key strategic opportunity to deliver targeted support to vulnerable households and strengthen climate action delivery. The Commission further highlights the role of Ireland's upcoming EU Presidency as a moment to demonstrate leadership in people-centred climate action.

In this context, **the priority is not simply to submit a Plan, but to submit a Plan that is robust, compliant, and capable of unlocking timely support for those most exposed to rising energy and transport costs.**

In light of the above, we respectfully urge the Government to:

- Publish a clear roadmap for the development of the Plan, including timelines, governance arrangements, and opportunities for stakeholder engagement;
- Prioritise the finalisation and submission of Ireland's Social Climate Plan to the European Commission without further delay;
- Ensure that the Plan fully aligns with the requirements of the Social Climate Fund Regulation, including robust targeting of vulnerability, clear milestones and indicators, and strong monitoring and accountability mechanisms;

- Ensure that Social Climate Fund resources are additional to existing national spending and are used to deliver structural, long-term solutions to energy and transport poverty; and
- Ensure effective coordination across relevant Departments, including Climate, Finance, Public Expenditure, and Social Protection, to support timely delivery, coherent financing, and targeted implementation.

The organisations supporting this letter - listed below - work across environmental justice and social justice issues, including addressing energy poverty and social inequality. We would welcome the opportunity to engage constructively with the relevant Department in the finalisation of the Social Climate Plan and to support efforts to ensure it delivers meaningful and lasting benefits.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your response.



LATINA WOMEN
AGAINST VIOLENCE

