WORLD GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL

#BUILDING LIFE



From roadmaps to reality

Progress report on transforming Europe's built environment, 2024

About #BuildingLife

#BuildingLife is a pioneering European initiative led by the World Green Building Council (WorldGBC) in collaboration with 16 national Green Building Councils (GBCs).

Since its launch in 2021, the project has grown significantly in both scale and influence, playing a pivotal role in advancing the European Green Deal's ambition to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050.

The initiative addresses Whole Life Carbon (WLC) — the combined impact of operational and embodied carbon in buildings. By tackling emissions across the entire lifecycle of the built environment, it drives an integrated, forward-looking approach to climate action.

Now in its second phase, #BuildingLife is moving from vision to implementation; with GBCs delivering and driving national WLC roadmaps that shape policy, transform industry practices, and foster collaboration across sectors.

Recognised as a supporting initiative of the Buildings Breakthrough, #BuildingLife contributes to a global framework enabling governments, businesses, and civil society to accelerate climate action in the built environment.

Through these efforts, #BuildingLife is helping to create buildings and communities that not only meet climate targets but also deliver long-term value, resilience, and sustainability across Europe.



#BuildingLife in Numbers

12
national WLC roadmaps*

1
EU Policy WLC roadmap

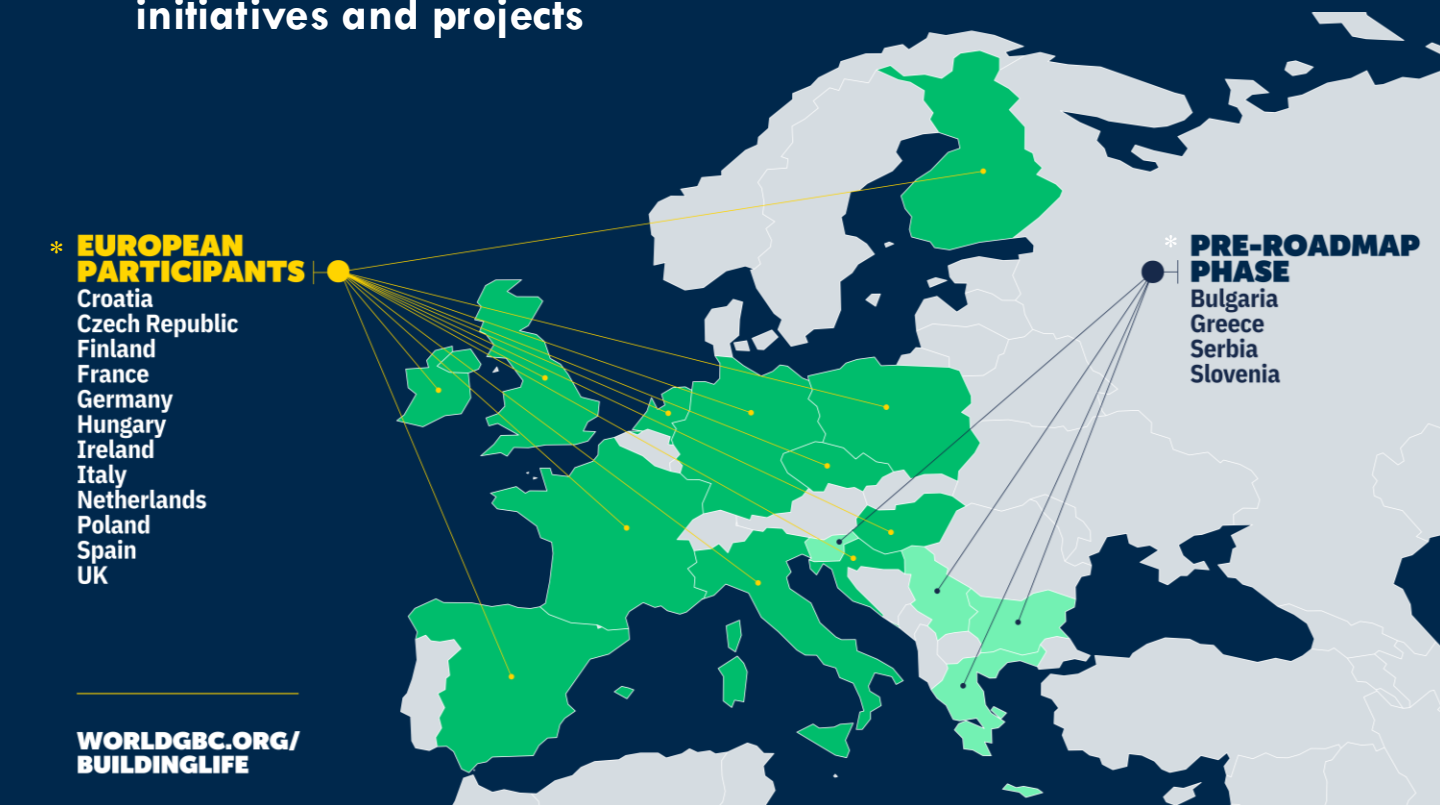
4
mapping market readiness to tackle WLC*

1,500+
stakeholders engaged

190+
ambassadors supporting

€60 million
additional funding leveraged for WLC initiatives and projects

152 million
social media reach in 2024



WORLDGBC.ORG/BUILDINGLIFE

Context across Europe

The year 2024 brought strong political headwinds for Europe — from economic uncertainty and mounting climate threats, to elections that reshaped leadership across the continent, resulting in a patchwork of climate priorities. The cost of living also remained high on the political agenda. As inflation surged, housing markets strained, and the path to climate neutrality became increasingly complex.

Yet the drive to address Whole Life Carbon (WLC) showed no signs of slowing. New EU directives, ambitious local carbon limits, and tightening standards kept the built environment in the spotlight — proving that even in turbulent times, momentum for change can accelerate.

#BuildingLife continued to lead positive change within the European political landscape. Through the collaboration championed by the GBCs driving the project, the sector reached a major legislative milestone: the revision of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD). This landmark reform placed building decarbonisation firmly at the centre of Europe's climate strategy — a key step toward achieving a decarbonised, zero-emission building stock by 2050.

Key trends

- **Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) revision** recognising WLC.
- **Political transitions:** New right-leaning coalitions in France, Ireland and the Netherlands.
- **Economic pressures:** Inflation and real estate crisis.
- **Municipal leadership:** such as Helsinki and Turku's WLC limits, and Scottish new build standards.
- **Energy transition** gained traction across the UK, Germany and Italy.

Why it matters

Amid the complexity, the #BuildingLife project has helped **anchor ambition in evidence**, providing policymakers and industry with a national roadmap for how lifecycle decarbonisation can become a reality.

The work of GBCs is enabling continuity, stability and direction for the sector through connecting EU goals with national implementation – showing what's possible when a united network acts with clarity and purpose.

Key achievements: EU policy

The 2024 revision of the EPBD marked the first inclusion of WLC reporting requirements, and was the result of sustained advocacy by GBCs through the #BuildingLife project. This built robust technical evidence, engaged key decision-makers and helped generate political momentum.

To support implementation, the WorldGBC created an EPBD Implementation Toolkit, offering detailed policy recommendations and real-world case studies.

These combined efforts have already influenced several governments, many of which are now developing national WLC roadmaps and policies.



EPBD Toolkit

Contents:

- EPBD Implementation Factsheets on MEPS and Lifecycle GWP
- Case study reports: Denmark, France, Sweden, London, Flanders and the Netherlands
- EPBD Policy briefing
- EU Taxonomy policy briefing
- EU Building Policy Tracker

Access the toolkit



EU Building Policy Tracker

Monitoring progress on:

- Building regulations
- Waste and circularity
- Sustainable finance
- Sustainable procurement

Access the Policy Tracker

Key achievements: Industry

In 2024, despite persistent challenges with data gaps and market fragmentation, many companies across the built environment strengthened their climate commitments, moving from ambition to action. They set clear targets, disclosed WLC data, and aligned their strategies with national roadmaps.

With the support of GBCs, the sector is now embedding WLC into core business strategies, while fostering greater transparency and accountability.

WorldGBC hosted the second #BuildingLife Summit on 3 June 2025, in Brussels.

European GBCs, partners and policy makers joined the conference, which centred around the theme 'Building Europe's Future: Sustainable Construction, Affordable Housing', and how the European project #BuildingLife can continue to drive policy reform. Find out more.



800+

companies have endorsed **national WLC roadmaps**



50%

of these companies have **published action plans** outlining how they will cut emissions



67

companies are actively **reporting on implementation progress**

Key achievements: Communications and outreach

In 2024, communications played a crucial role in raising the visibility of WLC across Europe. Once confined to expert circles, WLC is now part of the wider climate conversation, increasingly linked to housing, affordability and carbon accountability.

Through high-impact media, ambassador storytelling, and coordinated EU-level messaging, #BuildingLife has helped shift the narrative — reaching both policymakers and the public, and framing WLC as essential to achieving climate goals.



152 million

social media reach

122

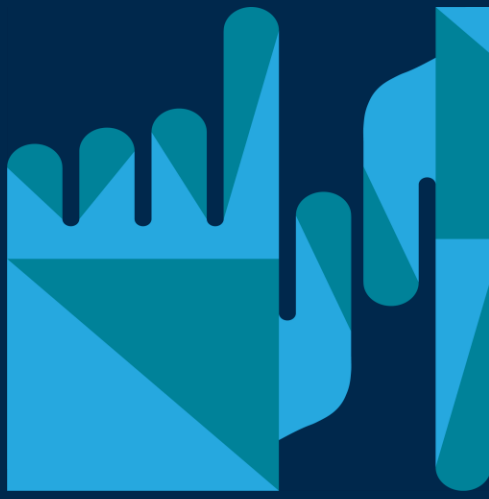
press mentions across 18 countries, with a media value of €169k

114,000+

EU Policy WLC Roadmap views

194

ambassadors from across the construction, political and sustainability sectors

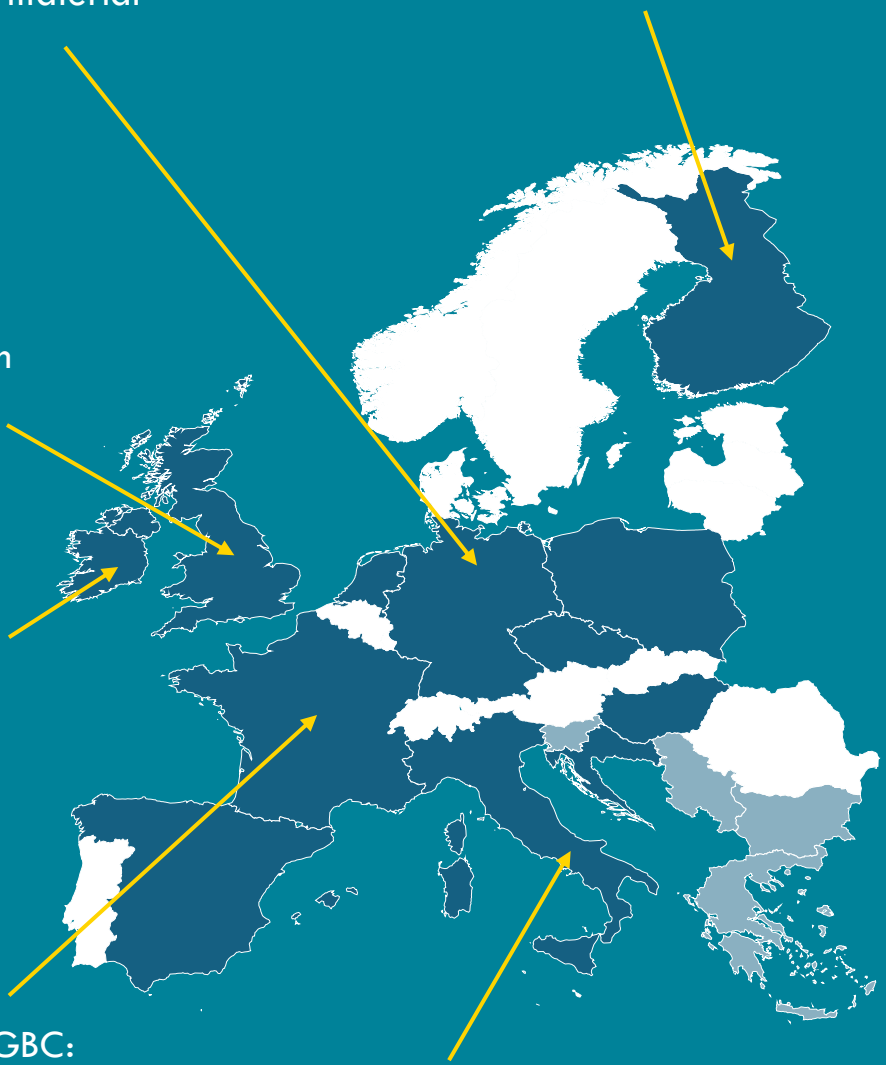


National insights

DGNB (Germany): A blog series showcases **best practices in circular economy,** digitalisation, refurbishment and material innovation.

Finnish GBC: Workshops have supported 28 companies in **developing or updating their carbon neutrality roadmaps,** with two new series planned for 2025 to expand this support.

UKGBC: Home Retrofit Investment Calculator, **shaping national policy discussions on investment** in sustainable housing.



Irish GBC: A structured engagement programme including 100+ one-on-one calls and **focus groups to track progress and identify solutions.**

Alliance HQE France GBC: Ecological Planning 2050 commission is helping to **define clear industry goals and best practices.**

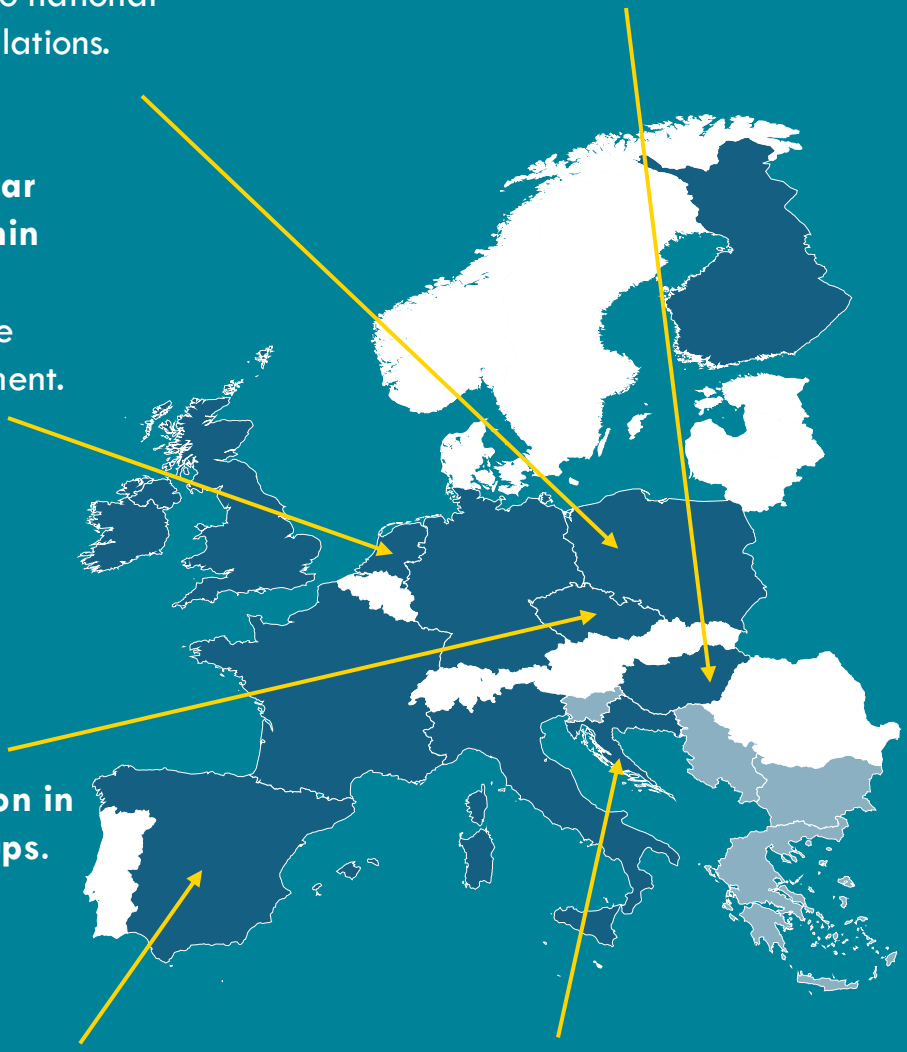
GBC Italia: endorsement and commitment mechanisms to **encourage companies to implement roadmap objectives and report emissions annually.**

National insights

Polish GBC: Established a policy task force to **collaborate with government officials on embedding WLC measures** into national building regulations.

Hungarian GBC: Industry engagement workshops to **raise awareness and educate stakeholders on WLC reduction** strategies.

Dutch GBC: Piloted **circular economy initiatives within the construction sector,** focusing on material reuse and sustainable procurement.



Czech GBC: Secured **government participation in sustainability task groups.**

GBC España: **Influenced national political parties** through targeted policy briefings, securing multiple meetings and discussions.

Croatia GBC: Advocated for key **decarbonisation and WLC methodologies** in upcoming 2025 law revisions.

Next steps

As Phase II advances, #BuildingLife is intensifying implementation, deepening collaboration, and driving crucial policy and industry transformations to accelerate Europe's journey toward a decarbonised built environment.



Policy focus

- Support Member States in implementing the EPBD using updated tools and guidance.
- Advocate for a strong delegated act on WLC reporting.
- Monitor national progress via the EU Building Tracker.
- Contribute to new EU priorities such as the Affordable Housing Plan, Circular Economy Act, and Procurement reforms.



Industry engagement

- Encourage more companies to disclose WLC data.
- Improve how GBCs engage and support industry, such as through streamlined tracking, stakeholder dialogue, and tools that turn WLC commitments into manageable, shared actions.



Communications

- Scale ambassador engagement.
- Adapt messaging to address the relevant political landscape.
- Diversify communication formats and platforms among the GBCs (podcasts, webinars, in-person events, blogs).

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