

RGI calls for a sustainable stimulus plan around the Green Deal in the design of the European Recovery and Reconstruction Package

The corona pandemic has created an unprecedented situation for our society and economy globally. Economic and social activities have been slowed down and recovery plans are now under discussion in Europe.

The Renewables Grid Initiative (RGI) strongly believes that the response to this emergency, as well as the plans for future revival, should have a European scope and be conducted in the spirit of collaboration and international solidarity.

Clearly, addressing the health crisis and the needs of the health sector is a key priority.

For the stimulus package, we see a necessary and beneficial complementarity in supporting the economy while pursuing the objectives of the Green Deal, thus creating new opportunities and benefits for the economy itself, the environment, the climate and the European citizens. Particular attention and financial resources need to be dedicated to building resilience among vulnerable parts of the population. Taking lessons from the ongoing pandemic, we consider that it is essential to create value at local, national and European level and to increase the social and political structures to face global challenges. This is of paramount importance as the climate crisis already is and increasingly will put our citizens and the economy at risk.

RGI is a community of Transmission System Operators and NGOs. We strongly believe that the electricity grid plays an active role in the energy transition by enabling the integration and efficient use of increasing shares of RES.

European investments in RES, the necessary grid and needed flexibility measures need to be scaled up to reach our decarbonisation targets and should be an important pillar of the recovery plan. They will provide new job opportunities while delivering long term sustainability and climate benefits.

In this context, the stimulus package should consider, among others, the following:

- Energy projects can become an opportunity to create local value for affected communities. This can be achieved by creating dedicated European financial mechanisms that enable and support local communities in contributing to the energy transition by deploying their own local resources, energy efficiency measures and digitalisation of the residential sector. By actively involving citizens in the energy transition, the important role of local and small-scale solutions for the European decarbonisation efforts can become clear, gain relevance and contribute to a secure, efficient and more flexible energy system. RGI calls for **European financial schemes** including both seed funding and access to standardised low rate capital **for communities** investing in the energy transition to be made available across Europe.

- Stakeholder engagement and precautionary avoidance of harm to biodiversity and ecosystems is essential when planning, locating and designing infrastructure. RGI calls European, national, regional and local authorities to promote the use of a **collaborative integrated spatial planning** process both on land and at sea to identify best sites for the expansion of grid and renewable energy infrastructure with the least environmental, landscape and social impacts.
- The **supply chains**, in particular of the critical technologies required to realise the energy transition, should be part of a resilient European industrial strategy fit for the future. In the shorter term, coordinated actions at national and EU level should help European suppliers of critical grid infrastructures to overcome the crisis, maintain grids in good operational conditions and secure a reliable electricity supply. Furthermore, grid and renewable energy infrastructure has the potential to create new jobs in the context of building, maintenance services, development of new technologies, system digitalization and new businesses related to flexibility, to mention some. RGI calls for the competent institutions to invest in the **creation of the expertise required**.
- Finally, RGI calls for **increased transparency of societal investment needs** as well as the cost of the energy transition. This should include technological options, as well as the external costs of non-action and/or delayed decarbonisation, which must be considered in planning processes and societal value discussions.

About the Renewables Grid Initiative (RGI):

RGI is a unique collaboration of NGOs and TSOs from across Europe engaging in an 'energy transition ecosystem-of-actors'. We promote fair, transparent, sustainable grid development to enable the growth of renewables to achieve full decarbonisation in line with the Paris Agreement. RGI Members originate from a variety of European countries, consisting of TSOs from Belgium (Elia), Croatia (HOPS), France (RTE), Germany (50Hertz, Amprion, TenneT and TransnetBW), Ireland (EirGrid), Italy (Terna), the Netherlands (TenneT), Spain (Red Eléctrica de España), Switzerland (Swissgrid); and the NGOs BirdLife Europe, Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe, Friends of the Earth Ireland, Fundación Renovables, Germanwatch, Legambiente, NABU, Natuur&Milieu, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Transport & Environment (T&E), WWF International and ZERO. RGI was launched in July 2009.