

## RGI's statement on the EU 2040 climate target

June 2023

The Renewables Grid Initiative (RGI) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of an EU climate target for 2040 and calls for a holistic approach.

RGI strongly believes that the EU 2040 climate target should be consistent with the Paris Agreement<sup>1</sup> and aligned with the greenhouse gas (GHG) budget. To achieve this, the target setting should be science-based and consider the latest scientific evidence, such as the latest reports of the European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change (ESABCC) and IPCC. Such an approach will increase the credibility of the upcoming proposal and set a good example for other regions around the globe as well as urge and incentivise the achievement of the 2030 climate target.

The EU 2040 climate target will have a transformative effect and require action across sectors and actors, with particular emphasis on the energy sector. RGI believes that increased climate ambition should be accompanied by increased renewable energy targets and energy efficiency, including at the system level. At the same time, to decarbonise our societies in a cost- and resource-efficient way, direct electrification of end-use sectors should be prioritised. To ensure the effectiveness of these advancements, it is crucial to deploy the necessary electricity grid infrastructure, within and between countries, at the same pace as the roll-out of renewable energy generation assets. Regrettably, the European Commission's call for evidence for an impact assessment fails to address the crucial role of electricity grids, both at the transmission and distribution levels. The sustainable expansion and upgrade of electricity grid infrastructure lie at the core of achieving a successful energy transition and meeting the 2040 climate target. It will not only facilitate the integration of RES into the energy system but also enhance social welfare and solidarity between Member States.

Moreover, achieving an ambitious 2040 climate target necessitates a holistic approach that also acknowledges the importance of the natural environment. The climate, energy and biodiversity crises are interdependent and mutually reinforcing, and thus, RGI regrets that the European Commission's call for evidence for an impact assessment falls short on recognising this. An ambitious pathway to climate neutrality and consequently an accelerated energy transition implies the significant deployment of energy transition infrastructure. This should go hand in hand with nature protection and restoration. On the one hand, supporting healthy ecosystems enhances their ability to function as carbon sinks and provides benefits towards climate change adaptation and resilience. On the other hand, such an approach will increase public acceptance for RES and electricity grid infrastructure and foster acceleration.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pac-scenarios.eu/>



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Lastly, the upcoming proposal on the EU 2040 climate target, alongside the policy responses thereafter, should pay due consideration to the impacts on societies, particularly on the most vulnerable ones. Meaningful public engagement at both, national and EU levels as well as strong distributional elements should be embedded and envisaged in decision-making processes. Effective implementation mechanisms and early involvement of civil society, affected communities and the general public, are key to a swift, just and equitable transition to climate neutrality.

### About RGI

RGI is a unique collaboration of NGOs and TSOs (Transmission System Operators) 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), Norway (Statnett), Portugal (REN), Spain (Red Eléctrica) and Switzerland (Swissgrid); and the NGOs Bellona Europa, BIOM, BirdLife Europe, Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe, Ember, France Nature Environnement (FNE), Friends of the Earth Ireland, Fundación Renovables, Germanwatch, Legambiente, NABU, Natuur&Milieu, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), WWF International and ZERO. Europacable and IUCN are Supporting Members.



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