
AT A GLANCE: LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION – SECTOR COUPLING AND POWER-TO-GAS: WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM THE NEXT COMMISSION ? - ENERGY EFFICIENT BUILDINGS: WHAT IS COMING UP UNDER THE NEXT COMMISSION ? - SMART CHARGING AS MINIMUM MANDATORY STANDARD FOR EV CHARGING

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GLOSSARY

MEP: Member of the European Parliament, a co-legislator within the EU that is made up of representatives from political parties throughout Member States.

COUNCIL OF THE EU: Co-legislator, made up of representatives from Member State Governments. Has a six-month rotating presidency, currently held by Finland until the end of December 2019.

EUROPEAN COUNCIL: The European Council is made up of the leaders of the EU member states, commonly known as EU27. It defines the EU's overall political direction and priorities but does not pass laws.

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Latest developments in the European Commission



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Over the past weeks, European Commission President-elect, Ursula von der Leyen, received nominations from Member States for Commissioner positions. As of the end of August 2019, 19 countries have submitted their candidate, out of which 9 are women and 12 are men. If Ms von der Leyen, is to honour her promise to have a gender balanced College of Commissioners, she will have to pressure remaining countries to designate more female candidates. Meanwhile, she began interviewing the nominees in order to allocate policy portfolios. In this exercise, she will need to take into consideration Member States' expressed preferences, while keeping a balance between different European regions, as well as political parties.

As of September 2019, Commissioner portfolios will be announced and the candidates will be submitted to a hearing in the European Parliament, where they will be questioned on their future plans and their ability to take on the job. Hearings are expected to last until October 2019 and will be followed by a vote from the European Parliament on the new Commission as a whole. If endorsed, the Commission is to present its work programme. By November 2019, the new Commission should take office and resume legislative work.

Confirmed Commissioner candidates are the following:

- **Germany:** Ursula von der Leyen – President (F)
- **France:** Sylvie Goulard (F)
- **Spain:** Josep Borrell – High Representative for Foreign Affairs (M)
- **Denmark:** Margrethe Vestager (F)
- **Netherlands:** Frans Timmermans (M)
- **Latvia:** Valdis Dombrovskis (M)
- **Bulgaria:** Mariya Gabriel (F)
- **Slovakia:** Maroš Šefčovic (M)
- **Ireland:** Phil Hogan (M)
- **Austria:** Johannes Hahn (M)
- **Estonia:** Kadri Simson (F)
- **Finland:** Jutta Urpilainen (F)
- **Hungary:** Laszlo Trócsányi (M)
- **Luxembourg:** Nicolas Schmit (M)
- **Greece:** Margaritis Schinas (M)
- **Croatia:** Dubravka Šuica (F)
- **Slovenia:** Janez Lenarčič, (M)
- **Malta:** Helena Dalli (F)
- **Cyprus:** Stella Kyriakides (F)
- **Belgium:** Didier Reynders (M)
- **Poland:** Janusz Wojciechowski (M)

(Source: [Interel](https://www.interel.eu))

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EU'S 2050 CLIMATE STRATEGY

Nordic ministers declare climate change and sustainability as key goals



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Nordic prime ministers have set a goal to make their region the world's most sustainable and integrated by 2030. Their vision will lead to more joint initiatives in education, innovation and research, as well as rolling out new renewable energy projects and encouraging more investment in the bioeconomy and circular economy.

The work will be headed by the Ministers for Nordic Cooperation (MNC), which has overall responsibility for turning the Nordic leaders' strategic goals into changes on the ground.

The [declaration](#) committed the MNC to pursuing climate diplomacy in international forums and to delivering the UN's sustainable development goals on gender equality, responsible production and consumption, and climate action.

At a meeting In January this year, Nordic prime ministers agreed to pursue carbon neutrality, while in April the region's climate and environment ministers called for action on marine pollution by plastics and microplastics. Their declaration signals an important message from the Nordic countries on climate change, ahead of re-start of discussions at Council level on the 2050 climate strategy on which no agreement is found yet.

(Source: [Ends Europe](#) + [Interel](#))

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CLEAN ENERGY

Sector coupling and power-to-gas: what can we expect from the next Commission ?



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Under the next legislature, starting from November 2019, the European Commission is expected to propose a review of the current gas rules, and include rules on sector coupling.

The Commission's proposal for a gas market reform is expected to address both short-term and long-term perspectives. In the short term, the Commission will acknowledge the potential of natural gas as a bridge fuel to a low carbon economy and seek to integrate further the operation of the EU internal gas market.

For the longer-term, decarbonisation scenarios of 70% of GHG emissions reduction or greater would effectively prevent the use of natural gas. For this reason, the Commission is expected to propose long-term decarbonisation solutions with a focus on sector coupling and an increasing share of renewable gases, including hydrogen.

On sector coupling, the Commission wants to enhance synergies and ensure closer integration between the electricity and gas sectors, with respect to both markets and infrastructure, allowing for the integration of the share of renewable energy on the one hand, and decarbonisation of the final use on the other. At this moment, there are some regulatory issues to be addressed such as the lack of an EU-wide definition of sector coupling, or that power-to-gas technologies face double charging transmission tariffs in Member States, which can eventually hamper their development and deployment.

The Commission is currently assessing the different pathways and issues mentioned above. It will be up to the next Commission -starting from 1 November- to decide when to formally start the political process of launching an impact assessment and consulting stakeholders. This can be expected in early 2020.

(Source: Intere!)

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Energy efficient buildings: what is coming up under the next Commission ?



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Following the adoption of the [Energy Performance of Buildings Directive](#), and ahead of its application from March 2020 onwards, the European Commission is set to help Member States and industry in implementing the Directive.

Based on concrete proposals in a leaked and draft Commission work programme, the Commission seeks to deploy the newest EU based technologies, such as solar tiles serving at the same the building insulation and on-building energy production.

Besides a full financial package to support housing associations, the Commission also seeks to publish guidelines addressed to Member States on the use of favourable taxation for energy efficient buildings as well as supportive measures for the reinforcement of energy performance certificate labels for buildings to better attract investments.

(Source: [Interel](#))

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Lack of carbon price hampers transition to renewable heating and cooling

The EU's transition to renewably sourced heating and cooling is being hampered by the lack of an effective carbon price on the sector, according to a [report](#) written for the European Commission.

Renewable technologies "play an important role in ensuring that the EU and its member states deliver on CO2 emissions reductions, but there is [no] price-tag associated with the different heating and cooling technologies", says the report, which was commissioned by the Directorate-General for Energy.

As a result, only solid biomass is currently cost competitive with fossil fuels for heat production. In contrast, biogas, heat pumps and solar thermal installations are still reliant on national support schemes in the absence of a functioning carbon price, the report states.

The recast Renewable Energy Directive is the main driver for expanding renewable heating and cooling in the EU, according to the report. "Its mere targets promote an expansion of the EU [renewables] market which in itself makes it a more attractive market to be in or enter," it says.

However, member states must ensure that they effectively transpose requirements for installers to obtain a certificate in renewable energy technologies, alongside measures to reduce the administrative costs of installing them.

A new [report](#) (in German) published by German thinktank Agora Energiewende suggests that a price of €50 per tonne of CO2 emitted by petrol, diesel, heating oil and natural gas in the consumer sector - not currently covered by the EU emissions trading system - would give a significant boost to climate action with only a small impact on low earners.

"Fears that a CO2 price must necessarily lead to a social imbalance are unfounded," said Christian Hochfeld, the director of Agora Verkehrswende, which also participated in the study. "Poorer citizens could even profit, if politicians act wisely."

(Source: [Ends Europe](#))

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Commission plans 1 million electric vehicle charging stations by 2025



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The European Commission expects that by 2025, there will be about 11 million electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles on Europe's roads that will require 1.1 million charging stations. There are about 120,000 today, according to a leaked draft Commission work programme.

The Commission therefore plans to launch a concrete initiative to build 1 million charging stations on European highways and urban areas by the end of the mandate. The total required investment need for publicly accessible alternative fuels infrastructure in the EU amount to about EUR 5.2 billion by 2020 and additional EUR 16 billion to EUR 22 billion by 2025.

The Commission does not plan to come up with new legislation, but the initiative would prioritize the 30 billion EUR for transport under the Connecting Europe Facility for the construction of alternative fuels charging infrastructure.

(Source: Intere!)

Smart charging as minimum mandatory standard for EV charging

The Commission plans to make smart charging as a minimum mandatory standard for electric vehicle charging infrastructure. This announcement is part of the Commission's leaked work programme that came out earlier this month. The Commission aims "to ensure that consumers benefit from smart charging through lower energy bills and cleaner energy".

Detailed policy work is also expected to take place under the new legislature on demand-response, which may as well include provisions on smart charging.

(Source: Intere!)