

Response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the EU energy sector: Council adopts conclusions



The Council today adopted conclusions on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the EU energy sector. Above all, the Council expresses its appreciation for staff in the energy sector for their dedicated and effective efforts to **ensure the continuous operation of the European energy system** during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Council highlights the **crucial role of the energy sector** in the EU's economic recovery and notes that the **European economy needs to become greener, more circular and more digital while remaining competitive globally**. The necessary economic transformation towards sustainable growth and climate neutrality, building on the European Green Deal, is a major opportunity to stimulate the member states' economies. It will also gradually reduce the use of fossil fuels and further promote European leadership in developing and deploying safe and sustainable low-carbon technologies in a cost-efficient manner while respecting the member state's right to choose their energy mix and appropriate technologies.

The Council further acknowledges the need for initiatives to support a **robust recovery plan**, towards an affordable, safe, competitive, secure and sustainable energy system. It considers important in the current circumstances to **streamline the state aid rules for environmental protection and energy** in order to facilitate support for investments necessary for the energy transition.

It also notes the need to further incentivise future decarbonisation investments, including through the improvement of the **EU carbon market** while developing a **carbon border adjustment mechanism** in a WTO compatible way.

In its conclusions, the Council calls on the Commission to continue its work, in cooperation with the member states, on initiatives planned in the framework of the European Green Deal and its investment plan, such as **the renovation wave, the EU strategy on energy system integration, the offshore renewable energy strategy, the review of the regulation on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure (TEN-E) and the renewable energy financing mechanism**.

In addition, the Council calls on the Commission to present an **action plan and a roadmap for hydrogen** with emphasis on renewable hydrogen to contribute to the energy transition.

The Council adopted these conclusions by written procedure.