



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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C(2020)319 final*

*Christian BUCHMANN
President of the Bundesrat
Dr Karl Renner-Ring 3
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Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Bundesrat for its Opinion on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions “Powering a climate-neutral economy: An EU strategy for energy system integration” {COM (2020) 299 final}.

The Communication sets out a vision of how the EU can accelerate the transition towards a more integrated energy system in Europe. It will guide the reforms of the European energy system in the next few years to deliver an effective, affordable and deep decarbonisation of the European economy. This Communication identifies the challenges to overcome, and lays out the levers that the EU can mobilise, and presents a roadmap of actions for the coming years.

Together with the Communication “A Hydrogen strategy for a climate-neutral Europe”¹, the Energy System Integration strategy is an intrinsic part of the European Green Deal².

The Commission welcomes the broad support expressed by the Bundesrat for the objectives pursued by the Communication, and its willingness to support the achievement of climate neutrality in the long term. The Commission takes note of the Bundesrat’s position that new technologies and, where appropriate, new infrastructure, must be used in an economically and environmentally optimal interaction.

The Commission strategy proposes concrete policy and legislative measures at the EU level to gradually shape a new integrated energy system, while respecting the different starting points of Member States. It is clear from the strategy that it does not affect Member States’ ability to determine the conditions from exploiting their energy resources, their choice between different energy sources and the general structure of their energy supply.

¹ COM(2020) 301 final

² COM (2019) 640 final

The Offshore renewable energy strategy³, adopted on 19 November 2020, assesses the EU's potential contribution and proposes ways forward to support the long-term sustainable development of this sector. It recognises that wind turbine manufacturers, companies specialised in the construction of towers and foundations, cable suppliers and vessels operators are all part of supply chain activities for the whole sector. Although offshore renewable installations are still concentrated in some sea basins, the industrial activity underpinning them is fed by a large number of businesses spread across EU countries and regions, including inland and landlocked regions, such as Austria.

The Commission acknowledges the position of the Bundesrat regarding the water legislation framework. In that sense, the Commission Strategy foresees an increasing role of storage technologies, especially pumped hydropower as it will provide additional flexibility for the overall management of the energy system and thus help to integrate increased shares of variable renewable energy production. This Communication leaves sufficient room for manoeuvre to Member States for elaborating their national strategies in the context of the Water Framework Directive.

The Commission acknowledges the position of the Bundesrat that other options than electrification of individual transport should be considered to decarbonise and reduce pollution, such as modal shift towards public transport. Accordingly, the strategy recognises that hydrogen has an important role to play in reducing emissions in hard-to-decarbonise sectors, in particular as a fuel in certain transport applications. In addition, the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy⁴ adopted on 9 December 2020 sets out how our transport system needs to decarbonise and modernise to reduce its emissions by 90% in 2050.

The Renovation Wave for Europe⁵ has proposed a wide range of concrete actions to accelerate the uptake of energy and resource efficiency measures and renewables in buildings across the EU in the next few years. These measures underline the need to take into account specific conditions of every geographic region of Europe, and facilitate linking specific national, regional and local incentives and support.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the issues raised by the Bundesrat and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

*Kadri Simson
Member of the Commission*

³ COM(2020)741 final

⁴ COM(2020)789 final

⁵ COM(2020)662 final