



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senato della Repubblica for its Opinion on the Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank on the Implementation of the Strategic Action Plan on Batteries: Establishing a Strategic Battery Value Chain in Europe {COM(2019) 176 final}.

As the Senato della Repubblica notes in its Opinion, the development of a complete and competitive value chain for batteries in Europe is essential in the context of the energy transition and the expected rapid growth in electro-mobility. Implementation of the Commission's Strategic Action Plan on batteries, through initiatives at EU, national, and regional level and involving all stakeholders, notably through the 'European Battery Alliance', will help ensure that European industry can take the lead and capture a greater part of the European and global market for batteries. The aim is to lay the ground for a sustainable, competitive and innovative battery ecosystem in the EU.

The Commission welcomes that the Senato della Repubblica shares the view that efforts should especially focus on the new generation of batteries and will require the full engagement of the public and private sectors. In this context, the Commission has noted with interest the actions taken by Italy, and in particular its intention to support battery production through an Important Project of Common European Interest (IPCEI).

Furthermore, the Commission shares the view that sustained and coordinated efforts are needed to support investments in research and innovation in battery advanced materials and chemistries to enhance Europe's performance in existing battery cell technologies and to pursue leadership in the next generation of battery technologies.

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The Commission agrees with the Senato della Repubblica that action should also be taken to reduce the EU's dependence on critical raw materials from abroad. The EU must diversify its sources of these materials, including domestic sources, make full use of its trade policy to ensure sustainable and secure supply, and deepen its shift towards a circular economy through waste recovery, re-use and recycling. The Commission welcomes that Italy is aiming to position itself as a leader in the recovery and recycling of battery materials.

As stated in its Report, the Commission has begun work on developing a robust legal framework complemented by European harmonised standards. The applicable legal requirements on the sustainable performance of batteries across the value chain will have a significant influence on the development and deployment of batteries technologies and the impact they will have on public health, safety, the climate and the environment.

Finally, the Commission agrees that demand for low- and zero-emission vehicles and the deployment of the necessary infrastructure, including wide distribution of publicly accessible charging points and bi-directional batteries for electric vehicles, go hand-in-hand. The Commission has adopted additional measures to accelerate the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure, including an additional €800 million for financing alternative fuels infrastructure on the main Trans-European Transport Network and nodes under the Connecting Europe Facility. The Commission has granted €317 million to 31 actions in the area of innovation and alternative fuels infrastructure, mobilising up to €2 billion in total investment. Beyond 2021, support for clean energy and transport infrastructure will continue from the Connecting Europe Facility and the new InvestEU Fund. From a regulatory perspective, Directive 2014/94/EU on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure already provides a common framework of measures. The Commission will publish its assessment of the performance of this Directive by the end of 2020, with a view to revising it if necessary. It will assess to what extent the current planning for roll-out of alternative fuels infrastructure as stipulated in National Policy Frameworks under the Directive is in line with the expected acceleration of low- and zero-emission vehicle uptake in the period post-2020.

The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Senato della Repubblica and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*