



ENERGYCITIES

Question to Commissioner-designate Kadri Simson

Subject: Support to local empowerment in the framework of the gas decarbonisation package

In the framework of the upcoming gas market reform, industry experts have exchanged views numerous times with the European Commission, notably via the so-called “Madrid forums”. So far, discussions have mainly centred around sector coupling between electricity and natural, renewable or decarbonised gas. Little attention however has been devoted to wider system integration with other energy carriers such as waste and ambient heat (which can be widely tapped via district heating networks and heat pumps), geothermal energy, biomass, etc.

These heating and cooling technologies and solutions allow for a greater involvement of local authorities and prosumers because of their decentralised nature. How does the European Commission intend to tap into this new empowerment potential as part of the upcoming gas market reform?

Questions to Vice-President-designate Frans Timmermans

Subject: Improved multi-level governance in the framework of the proposed Climate Pact

In the first 100 days of your mandate, you will have to deliver a new “European Climate Pact” that is expected to bring about a new “climate culture in Europe”.

Some 8,000 cities have already committed to ambitious climate and energy action via the EU Covenant of Mayors. How do you plan to seize the Climate Pact opportunity to encourage Member States to install or reinforce coordinated energy planning with their local authorities? Could the “Energieakkoord” governance model from your home country serve as an example in this respect?

Subject: Introduction of climate-proofed EU budget and monitoring of Member States’ own climate proofing

The only path to reach the 2050 climate neutral target means revising the 2030 target and, crucially, aligning all policies with climate neutrality.

The EU budget should go hand in hand with a climate budget transposing each budget line into its cost in GHG emissions. This would ensure that money spent mitigating climate change is not undone by spending on other budget items. For example, tackling heat poverty through energy efficiency and insulation rather than subsidising carbon intensive heat in wasteful homes. Ideally, it should also include a resource consumption scoreboard. The climate law should include the same exercise in the European Semester. Climate budgeting should be the instrument to assess, on an annual basis, if all Member States are on track or not to reach climate neutrality. Most importantly, it must ensure the mobilisation of all policies and actors.

How will you ensure that the EU budget is 100% climate-proofed (future-proofed) and how would you expand this tool to member state budgets?

Question to Commissioner-designate Mariya Gabriel

Subject: The role of local and regional energy agencies

As part of the new mission-driven approach of the future Horizon Europe programme, the European Commission has identified “Climate neutral and smart cities” as one of its 5 strategic axes.

As Special Advisor to Commissioner Moedas, Professor Mariana Mazzucato has highlighted that the mission-driven approach would not be successful “without new capabilities and financing structures”. When it comes to designing and implementing climate policy, European cities have heavily relied on their local and regional energy agencies. A lot of these supporting structures are however either under threat or still missing in many EU Member States. How do you intend to address this issue in the upcoming R&I budget priorities?

Question to Commissioner-designate Elisa Ferreira

Subject: Support of the new DG for Structural Reform Support to Europe’s cities and regions investments in the clean energy transition

Cities and regions play a critical role in investing in Europe’s clean energy transition. Their investments create sustainable jobs, green growth and new opportunities for citizens. According to [2017 EU Commission findings on government investment in the EU](#), 54% of public investment is carried out by local and regional authorities in the EU.

The new Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support under your leadership will offer technical and financial support for reforms. It is also set to support Member States’ structural reforms aimed at speeding up growth-enhancing investment, including in the clean energy transition.

That being said, and bearing in mind that European cities and regions are responsible for the majority of public investment in the EU, can you answer the following questions:

- Will a new dedicated unit within the DG for Structural Reform Support be created to specifically support growth-enhancing investment of Europe’s cities and regions in the clean energy transition?
- Will the DG for Structural Reform Support furthermore support effective multi-level governance by aligning public investment flows in the clean energy transition between local, regional and national authorities in Europe?



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Question to Commissioner-designate Elisa Ferreira and to Vice-President designate Frans Timmermans on the “Just Transition Fund”

Subject: A broaden scope for the Just Transition Fund

EU policies have been supporting the local energy transition for years with great success but always fell short of supporting new governance models and mobilisation of all actors in order to co-design transition strategies and to implement them successfully.

The outgoing EU Parliament had issued the call for the creation of a new EUR 5 billion Just Energy Transition Fund, whose objective would be to “*address societal, socio-economic and environmental impacts on workers and communities adversely affected by the transition from coal and carbon dependence*” in its interim report on the Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027. This new funding instrument would also have to allocate sufficient resources “*for the development of inclusive, local and just transition strategies, with the reconversion of sites and the creation of decent and sustainable jobs, together with reskilling and upskilling in clean processes and technologies based on renewables or energy efficiency solutions*”.

The Just Transition Fund should be **available to all territories** with locally anchored investment plans for the next decade, based on mapping potential, capacity building, the design of decentralised energy projects and local consumption, sustainable mobility plans and a renewed, adapted, local governance to implement these transition strategies, with the mobilisation of all stakeholders.

How will you ensure that the EU Just Energy Transition Fund effectively supports the transformation of local economies?
