On 24 June DG GROW met with the following NGOs to discuss the upcoming hydrogen strategy and the European Clean Hydrogen Alliance: Climate Action Network Europe, WWF EU, European Environmental Bureau, E3G, and Carbon Market Watch.

The NGOs had the impression that the hydrogen strategy would focus more on supply and asked for sectorial roadmaps for the hydrogen use in hard-to-abate sectors. They expressed concerns about the capacity of underground CO2 storage space. They proposed to limit the use of carbon capture and storage (CCS) for hard-to-abate sectors and explore other options than CCS in other sectors such as hydrogen. They also expressed concerns about potential conflicts of interests from fossil-energy companies for CCS.

In their view, the pathway for renewable hydrogen would not require blue hydrogen and it would be important to avoid lock-in effects of using the natural gas infrastructure for hydrogen blending, potentially leading to sustained demand for natural gas, for example, in domestic applications, and delaying decarbonization of various sectors. In their view, priority should be given to hydrogen use for hard-to-abate sectors like energy-intensive industries and heavy mobility.
They called for the Commission to ensure coherence of the hydrogen strategy with the climate neutrality objective and expressed concerns about financial support for hydrogen projects using electricity produced from fossil fuels.

The NGOs underlined the importance of involving civil society early in the process of the European Clean Hydrogen Alliance. They would be willing to contribute to the alliance for an investment agenda for decarbonisation and would like to be involved in discussions on targets and milestones. They expressed concerns about a lack of transparency concerning the 14 industrial ecosystems and a lack of civil society participation in other industrial alliances.

We pointed out that civil society representatives will be invited to the kick-off meeting of the Clean Hydrogen Alliance and will be welcome to participate in all workstreams of the alliance. We explained that the Alliance does not focus on supply, but wants to bring clean hydrogen supply-side and demand-side (e.g. mobility, energy-intensive industries) together for scaling up clean hydrogen.