

## Meeting Commissioner Sinkevičius-Eurelectric

VC, 20-05-2020

### Meeting report

The meeting took place at the request of Eurelectric.

- Participants list:

Mr Magnus Hall, Eurelectric

Mr Kristian Ruby, Eurelectric

Cabinet: Commissioner and Ms Camilla Bursi

DG ENV:

**Eurelectric:** expressed full commitment to the target for decarbonisation, even before 2050, as well as full support for European Green Deal as recovery strategy. They underlined the need to expand massively offshore wind production, raised questions about balance with biodiversity objectives, while coexistence is however, possible if the objectives are integrated. In this respect highlighted that permitting and marine strategic planning as very important. Eurelectric furthermore raised similar issue with hydropower, even if there are fewer opportunities for further expansion, and raised concerns about Biodiversity Strategy target of making free 25,000 Km of river flows, which can be detrimental for dams. Pointed to the national interpretations of Water Framework Directive, which can sometimes very restrictive.

**Commissioner SINKEVICIUS:** underlined the role of Environmental Impact Assessments and Strategic Planning for assessment and identification of mitigation measures to preserve water ecosystems and find synergies between hydropower and water protection. He clarified that the objective of protecting 25,000 Km of free flows of rivers in Europe means 1.5% of the total and that focus is on removing obsolete dams. He explained that the Water Framework Directive fitness check showed the legislation was fit for purpose and no revision is foreseen. He recalled Commission guidance on hydropower and Natura 2000 to help implementation and avoid unnecessary administrative burdens. On offshore wind energy, he highlighted its importance for reaching climate neutrality, the need for compliance with environmental legislation when in or close to protected areas, the proper conduct of Environmental Impact Assessments as well as the role of strategic planning for synergies between sectors and countries. He announced update guidance for developing wind energy projects in line with environmental legislation for the end of the year. He pointed to the need to look at win-win solutions, positive for deployment of energy and biodiversity objectives, during preparation, construction, operation and decommissioning.