



## DG ENVIRONMENT

**Commissioner Virginijus SINKEVIČIUS**  
**Environment, Oceans and Fisheries**

### **RECHARGE Annual Plenary** **Video recorded message**

**(to be recorded on 4 December 2020)**

### **BRIEFING NOTE**

**Scene setter / Context:**

*You have agreed to send a five-minute Video Message to open the annual plenary of RECHARGE, the European industry association for advanced rechargeable and lithium batteries. They describe their mission as 'promoting advanced rechargeable batteries as a key technology that will contribute to a more empowered, sustainable and circular economy.' Their membership covers all aspects of the advanced rechargeable battery value chain in Europe, from suppliers of primary and secondary raw materials to battery, equipment and manufacturers, logistic partners and battery recyclers.*

*Your message will be introduced RECHARGE president [REDACTED] They have requested a message that elaborates on the new rules for batteries, and how the legislation fits into the European Green Deal. They are particularly interested in hearing about how the new legislation is going to support the ambition of developing a sustainable, innovative and competitive battery ecosystem in Europe.*

*After your short message, ENV Head of Unit [REDACTED] will present the proposal in greater detail and take questions from the floor.*

Name of main contact person:

Telephone number:

Directorate/Unit:



*DG ENV, Unit B1*

## Speech

Good morning ladies and gentlemen, and thank you for this invitation to participate in your Annual Plenary.

As you know, there is change in the air.

A few days from now, the Commission will propose a modernisation of the European regulatory framework for batteries.

I know you will study it very closely.

We are still fine-tuning the details, but I'd like to give you a quick overview of the contents.

(Pause)

From the beginning, our constant concern is to ensure the sustainability of the battery value chain.

We are doing this for many reasons.

The strategic role of the batteries sector is immensely important for Europe.

We need you to help the Union deliver on many of its objectives.

You are vital enablers for renewables, for achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, and for our zero-pollution ambition as well.

You have a huge impact on essential elements of our society and our economy, from mobility and communications to climate action and energy storage.

And, of course, you place a remarkable number of batteries on our market.

(Pause)

We have been very active on batteries in the last few years, including in the context of the Battery alliance.

The new framework will modernise the existing Directive, adapting it to the latest social, economic, and technical developments.

It will be here in a matter of days, and it will show that Europe is serious about delivering on the Green Deal.

We all know it's important, because it deals with a critical value chain.

But it's also important because it exemplifies a new way of making policy.

When you talk about sustainability, you need an integrated, inclusive approach.

We are doing that here by addressing market, social and environmental issues all at the same time.

The result should ensure that only high-quality batteries are placed on the EU market.

Batteries produced with the lowest possible environmental impact, using materials obtained in full respect of social and ecological standards.

Batteries that are long-lasting and safe, that can be repaired or reused.

At the heart of the proposal is circularity.

That means using resources more efficiently, and new targets for collecting, recycling and recovering materials.

(Pause)

During the preparation of the proposal, RECHARGE was very active.

We listened carefully to your views on many issues.

You were very prudent in highlighting issues of concern.

The second life of batteries from electric vehicles, the possibility of banning primary portable batteries, the limits to the carbon footprint of production processes, and collection and recycling.

I think we have found the right balance.

What we propose includes limit values for sustainability requirements.

It introduces a (new) set of sustainability requirements, including the gradual roll-out of minimum requirements on recycled content, and maximum thresholds on life cycle carbon footprint emissions.

Producers wishing to place batteries in the Union market will have to ensure that their batteries meet these requirements.

The proposal also includes new targets for the collection and recycling of waste batteries, and recovery of the valuable materials they contain.

The targets will give economic operators the legal certainty they need to plan and execute investments.

(Pause)

You will be getting more details from my services in a moment.

But I would like to finish by thanking you for the good cooperation to date.

I hope that continues, and even develops further, during the next phases of the legislative process.

What we are presenting is an agenda for the next five years.

Its full implementation will require a number of elements of secondary legislation.

And there too, I look forward to working closely with you once again.

This isn't just about batteries.

It's about building a more sustainable Europe, a Europe that is more resilient, and more prepared for future shocks.

And on that, I'm sure we can work closely together.

Thank you.