

Commissioner Sinkevicius meeting with ENGIE (Claire Waysand and Guillaume Gillet)

03-06-2020, videoconference

Meeting report

The meeting took place at the initiative of ENGIE

ENGIE expressed full support to the European Green Deal (EGD) and green recovery policies of the Commission, as climate change is the next crisis, thus recovery must promote a greener Europe. ENGIE also underlined that the public investments is only part of the solution for green transition, a right and supportive framework is needed to attract private investments. Offshore wind was particularly mentioned. Concrete measures to develop offshore wind are welcome, while it is important to reconcile interests of various stakeholders, ex. fishers and energy producers, as well as biodiversity. In this context, permitting is often too slow so installed technologies could be outdated. ENGIE welcomed taxonomy and underlined importance of transition technologies, like natural gas – needed in some countries to phase out coal. Circular economy solutions play an important role, like biomethane production from waste, use of waste energy in district heating or reuse and recycling of wind blades. Life cycle should guide all action.

The Commissioner underlined that the support from stakeholders to EGD policies was very important. Europe must learn lessons from Covid crisis: resilience, sustainability and fair recovery remain key, especially regarding public investments. Strategic autonomy is also key, such as more local food systems or circular economy as well as digital transition. The Commissioner underlined importance of sustainable finance and taxation. Taxonomy regulation and delegated act will define green investments. This includes the principle of no significant harm, as in the EGD. The political agreement recognizes different types of activities, including transition activities. The Commissioner stressed that offshore wind was a key for decarbonisation, jobs and growth. Expansion of renewable energy is the only sustainable solution for Europe. However, we need to take into account environmental impacts and avoid mistakes made on land. Oceans are also growing source of food and materials: we need to avoid over-exploitation, integrating knowledge of marine ecosystems. Maritime Spatial Planning very important, as well as cross-border cooperation. Look for win-win situations and for innovations ex like floating offshore. Demand of raw materials (also for wind and solar) brings new challenges, environmental and economic (dependency) as we have seen during the crisis. For example, recycling of decommissioned or batteries show the importance of integration of the circular economy concepts also in renewable energy.