



EUROPEAN CLUSTER
COLLABORATION PLATFORM

Renewable Energies: How to accelerate technology uptake?

Summary

EU Clusters Talks
9 November 2022, 8:30 – 9:30 CET

An initiative of the European Union





Renewable Energies: How to accelerate technology uptake?

The European Cluster Collaboration Platform organised this EU Clusters Talk on 9 November 2022, 8:30 – 9:30 CET, to discuss challenges and opportunities for the uptake of transformational technologies in the different renewable energy sectors.

Agenda of the meeting

Moderation: Chris Burns

1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform: Support for Ukraine
Gian Marco Desogus, Programme Officer, Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO), European Commission
Iryna Krymus, Ukraine Support Task Force, Energy Community Secretariat
2. From Our Own Correspondent: ELBE Eurocluster
3. Perspectives from the European Commission
Jacek Truszczyński, Deputy Head of Unit at Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW), European Commission
4. Panel debate: how can we accelerate the technology uptake for renewable energies?
Frederik Loeckx, Managing Director, Flux50
Marcos Suárez García, Project Manager, Basque Energy Cluster, Coordinator ELBE Eurocluster
Marc Rechter, Board Member, MCPV
Sean Finlay, Director, Geoscience Ireland
5. Funding opportunities

Key messages:

- The European Commission is working on strengthening the supply chain of renewable technologies, accelerating permitting for their deployment, creating frameworks for collaboration, setting product standards, increasing the level of funds, and bringing forward new regulatory frameworks for raw materials.
- We need to bring the supply chains to Europe in order not to risk new dependencies on raw materials for renewable energies.
- Clusters and companies are dealing with “not in my backyard” resistance, which is why citizens need to be involved in the transition.
- Energy infrastructure needs an upgrade to a decentralised network.
- There is a clear urgency to accelerate the industrial scale-up. Timing and raw materials are crucial for Europe to stay competitive.
- We need to de-risk geothermal energy to include it in the energy mix.



1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform: Support for Ukraine

Gian Marco Desogus, Programme Officer, Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO), European Commission

Iryna Krymus, Ukraine Support Task Force, Energy Community Secretariat

After the introduction by moderator Chris Burns, the webinar starts with the call for donations of energy equipment to Ukraine. Gian Marco Desogus explains the work of the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) to answer to the Russian aggression on Ukraine. DG ECHO is coordinating the **logistics of energy-related items from the Member States to Ukraine**. The EU Civil Protection Mechanism enables a coordinated response from the partners and avoids duplication of efforts. DG ECHO cooperates with the Energy Community Secretariat to channel offers from private companies in the energy sector. From the beginning of the Russian invasion into UA, over 70 donations of energy-related items have been channeled by Member States and partners under the UCPM.

Iryna Krymus complements the presentation, explaining the matchmaking mechanism between donor companies and the Ukrainian companies. The Energy Community Secretariat is collaborating with the Ministry of Energy in Ukraine to receive the **list of needs**. This list is communicated to donor companies in Europe. The Energy Community Secretariat assists the companies in **making the donations, match the items, prepare the documentation and logistics, and support with the delivery**.

2. Perspectives from the European Commission

Jacek Trzuszczynski, Deputy Head of Unit at Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW), European Commission

Jacek Trzuszczynski explains the two approaches on how to accelerate the uptake of renewables. On the one hand, we must accelerate the deployment, and on the other hand, we need to **strengthen the supply chain of those technologies**. He points out that DG GROW is mainly focusing on this second aspect to avoid replacing the dependence on Russian gas with a dependence on China's materials for renewables, for example for solar panels or heat pumps.

Furthermore, he elaborates on the **challenging context** for the transition. **Energy prices** in the EU are high, which makes investments harder. Secondly, **other countries also want to re-shore** the supply chains with ambitious policies, and thirdly, there are still **post-pandemic supply chain disruptions**, especially for raw materials.

He points out five key actions that the EU undertakes:

- Rapidly **accelerate the permitting** for deployment
- Create **frameworks for collaboration** and synergies; examples are the Battery Alliance (set in 2018) and the Solar Alliance, which will be launched in December
- **Set product standards** to protect our excellence in technology production and to ensure that imports face the same levels
- **Increase the level of funds** available in the EU and simplify the access to finance
- Bring forward **new regulatory framework for raw materials** and development of mining in the EU

In addition, he explains that geothermal energy has great potential. At the moment, there are no dedicated measures, but they will work more on that technology.



3. Panel debate

The discussion focused on the necessary actions to accelerate the deployment of renewable energies in Europe.

Frederik Loeckx explained that the cluster is approaching the transition from a **system perspective** as renewables are part of an energy system. He highlighted that the demands are much higher than the supply at this moment, which is why they work on collaborative projects for digital twins for neighbourhoods for group purchasing and on international collaboration for installation companies to accelerate the deployment. Marcos Suárez García adds that his cluster – and the “ELBE PLUS” and “ELBE EUROCLUSTERS” partnerships he represents - is also giving the needed support for companies on **internationalisation**.

Marc Rechter explains that MCPV is working on the installation and deployment of PV manufacturing sites in Europe. He speaks about **two crucial risks for Europe**: most of the energy is coming from outside of Europe, and there is a lack of industry within Europe that addresses the energy transition. The upscaling cannot be done by one company alone, which is why we need to **bring the supply chain to Europe**, which requires the coordination among the upstream and downstream supply chain partners. For the upscaling, the challenges are **timing and raw materials**.

Regarding **geothermal** energy, Sean Finlay suggests that this energy source should be included in the renewable energy mix. The potential is there, but there is still work to be done from the national and local governments to **de-risk this energy source with seismic studies**. He mentions two important projects on geothermal energy: Geo-Energy Europe 2 and the European Technology and Innovation Partnership.

The speakers agree that the companies face a **“not in my backyard” resistance** from the population and local authorities, e.g., for wind turbine installations. Therefore, we must engage the citizens in the dialogue.

Frederik Loeckx highlights that we are **lagging behind in the development of offshore wind** compared to the policy plans, e.g., there are only very few permits issued in Flanders. For offshore wind energy, Sean Finlay highlights that Ireland has an immense potential and that the country is working on the grid to export to European countries.

For the green transition, the speaker defer to a different approach on how to connect the grids. Frederik Loeckx suggesting having a **decentralised network**. This infrastructure includes electricity, heat, hydrogen, and other sources to have a complete energy system. Sean Finlay suggests investing in more costly infrastructure that involves underground cables.

Marcos Suárez and Marc Rechter stress the **urgency to accelerate the industrial scale-up**. For PV, permitting is a bottleneck. Marc Rechter furthermore shares his view that Europe is becoming uncompetitive from an investor's point of view. The investment money is flowing to other countries which have brought forward aggressive packages for renewable energies. He sees the biggest challenges in rapidly creating a package that is a **policy and support instrument and that keeps Europe competitive**. The orders need to come to Europe for the industrial transformation.



5. Funding opportunities

Nina Hoppmann, team member of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Closing the EU Clusters Talk, Nina Hoppmann highlighted the following funding opportunities that are accessible to Ukrainian entities:

1. [Second round of Interreg Baltic Sea Region 2021–2027 funding](#). Deadline to apply is 5 January 2023.
2. [Integrated wind farm control](#). Deadline to apply is 10 January 2023.
3. [Efficient and circular artificial photosynthesis](#). Deadline to apply is 10 January 2023.
4. [Innovation Fund Large Scale Projects](#) for clean-tech manufacturing, mid-sized pilots, general decarbonisation, and innovative electrification. Deadline to apply is 21 November 2022.