

Stakeholders call for delivery of EU Strategy for a Sustainable Built Environment

Brussels, 11 March 2021

Dear Executive Vice-President Timmermans, dear Commissioners Breton and Sinkevičius,

The 31 signatories of this letter, representing a diverse range of stakeholders, are writing to call on the European Commission to deliver an ambitious EU Strategy for a Sustainable Built Environment (SSBE) as part of its implementation of the EU Circular Economy Action Plan.

In the EU, buildings and the construction industry accounts for: 40% of energy consumption, 36% of CO₂ emissions, 50% of raw materials, and 33% of waste and water use, as well as being a pillar for a sustainable recovery, through decarbonisation, local job creation, quality of life, innovation and digitalisation. Citizens and the market expect a strong signal that the European Commission is ready to drastically reduce these figures towards 2030 and 2050 respectively.

Announced in the Circular Economy Action Plan, the initial proposal for the SSBE rightly aims to ensure *coherence across the relevant policies addressing climate, energy and resource efficiency, management of construction and demolition waste, accessibility, digitalisation and skills*. This strategy must make clear links between existing proposals, and existing legislation such as the Waste Framework Directive and Construction Products Regulation, as well as other ongoing revisions of the Energy Efficiency Directive, Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, and include housing and urban planning issues currently missing from the proposal.

Developing an integrated EU policy framework for a sustainable Built Environment is now paramount. Clear coordination of actions is needed to capitalise on commitments already made in the EU Recovery Plan and Renovation Wave and Whole Lifecycle Carbon Roadmap, and progress already made through the EU LEVEL(s) framework which is set to play a key role in underpinning and deploying lifecycle thinking to building sustainability. The New European Bauhaus Initiative is also set to be important to combine design, sustainability, accessibility, affordability and investment in order to help deliver the European Green Deal.

To accelerate the uptake of sustainable and circular building solutions and harmonised methodologies, and generate adequate investment, the construction value chain needs visibility and a clear commitment by the EU to develop a coherent legislative framework to drive sustainability and circularity of buildings and tackle the construction sector's major environmental impacts. The SSBE, can pave the way for effective implementation by harmonising the fragmented landscape of building requirements and effectively tackle the sector's major environmental impacts.

Citizens and stakeholder groups now all need clarity and strong coordination from the European Commission in the form of a strategy of plans to deliver a comprehensive and joined up approach to sustainability of the built environment.

All below signatories to this letter are committed to a more sustainable built environment using the policies and tools highlighted and will continue to engage in ongoing policy initiatives. We urge the Commission to deliver the EU Strategy for a Sustainable Built Environment in 2021 as a priority, to bring the pieces of this puzzle together, and coordinate a transition to sustainable buildings in the EU, ultimately in support of EU climate law and the Paris Agreement.

Contact information

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Yours sincerely,



